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STANDING!



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NICHOLAS GODIN

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ISSUE 50 • £4.95



taste

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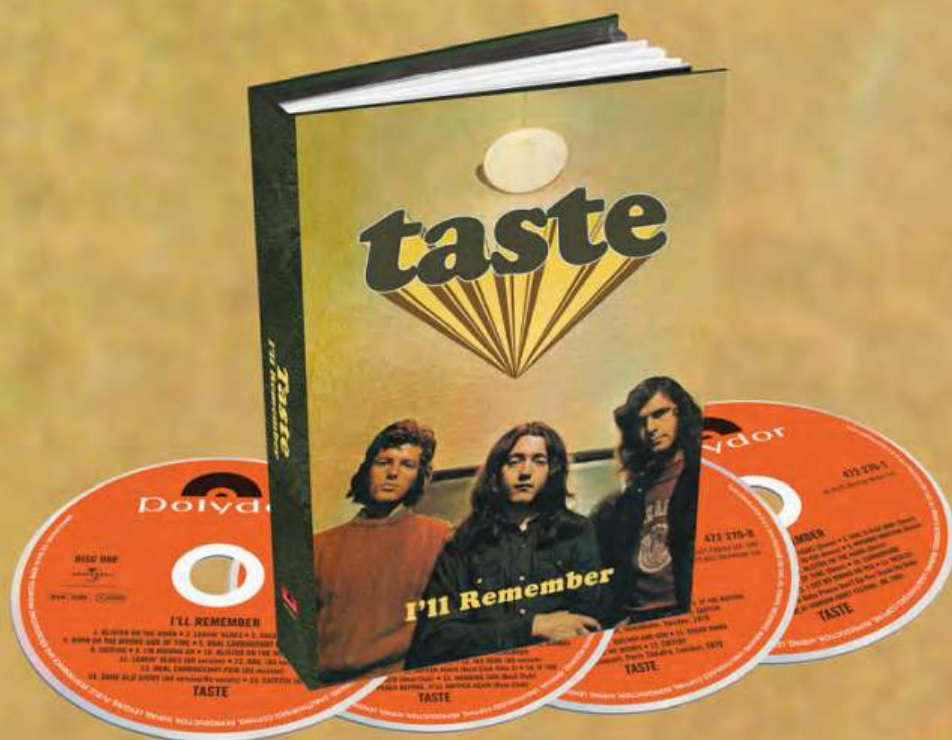
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UNIVERSAL MUSIC CATALOGUE

SHINDIG!

ISSUE 50, SEPTEMBER 2015

Howdy Shindiggers!

It does seem like a long time ago that I saved pounds and pounds to buy a PC to enable me to write about garage-punk in pipe dream fanzine *Gravedigger*, published in 1994. Two issues down the line this tentative photocopied affair became the professionally printed *Shindig!* – yes *Shindig!*, the base version of the very publication you're holding. The first few issues put together with PJ Crittenden also seem like a lifetime ago, but with We The People on the cover and writers like Lenny Helsing coming on board, the template for what you're holding was set; in a somewhat primitive and rough around the edges format. In the year 2000 Andy Morten appeared in time for issue #5, our Move cover, and since then we have basically run with it, and are still here after many ups and our recent down.

Shindig! may be 20 years and 57 issues old (if you want to be pedantic), but it's from Vol 2 Issue #1 – the magazine that emerged onto the High Street in late 2007 – that we're celebrating our 50th issue with. Of course, back in 1994 I had no great aims for the title, yet it consistently continued to grow enough to take it far beyond its humble roots. Even today, the magazine is about music and things that we cherish and believe in. People have come and gone, our remit has expanded, as have our horizons, though *Shindig!*'s core values remain the same: spreading the word about great bands, records and films and curating a unique melting pot of genres, styles and people into a solid whole.

It would be lovely to see you at our 50th birthday bash at Rough Trade East, London (goo.gl/XwqryB) and to raise a glass to our continued success. Emails, Facebook messages and Tweets pour in on a daily basis, so thank you for the incredible support.

This issue features Kenney Jones discussing the formation and fun of The Faces, their one time US support band, the wonderful Audience, recollections from UK folk furtherer John Renbourn, the southern white country soul brothers Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham, a brilliant 20 questions with The God Of Hellfire Arthur Brown, latter day New York folk-rockers The Optic Nerve, Swedish long hairs Graveyard and an interview with Air's Nicolas Godin about his incredible debut album.

Raise a toast to us as we turn 50 with our printed equivalent of totally unacceptable shoes and rock 'n' roll sunglasses. We look forward to doing it all over again when we turn 60.

Lay back, pour a drink and enjoy.

See you in six weeks,

Jon 'Mojo' Mills
Editor-In-Chief



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The brand new releases, compilation standouts, old album tracks and dusty 45s rockin' our world this month



THE FACES

Flying

Even at this point in their short but fruitful career the ex-Small Faces (who there was now nothing "small" about) and Jeff Beck cast-offs Ron Wood and Rod Stewart hit upon the formula they'd become legendary for. First single 'Flying' has a classic Stewart vocal, the SF Hammond, bass and drums combo, and some splendid Woody slide. Who needed lil' Stevie anyway?

Available on: *You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything* (Rhino box set)

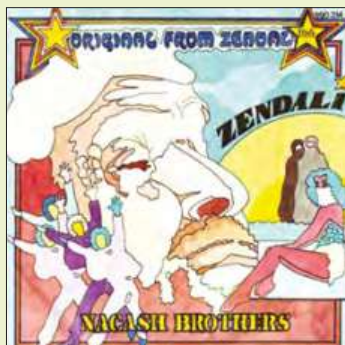


SUSAN JAMES

Sea Glass

Susan James has quietly released five albums of country-tinged singer-songwriter fare to date but little in her canon prepared us for this arresting cocktail of California sunshine, baroque arrangements (courtesy of High Llama Sean O'Hagan) and ornate instrumentation. It's the first record we've heard that truly evokes the wanderlust and questing spirit of benchmarks like Linda Perhacs' *Parallelograms*, while remaining firmly in the pop firmament.

Available on: SJM CD



NACASH BROTHERS

After Winter

Tucked away on the B-side to a now forgotten French 1976 single, this track is as odd as they come. Over a spaced-out waltz peppered with deep bass and analogue keyboard effects, our male protagonist gets all cosmic in an attempt to persuade his lover to stay with him, in the process coming over like Barry White on acid. Equal parts creepy and brilliant.

Available on: B-side of 'Zendali' (BASF/Disco Più 7")



AGUATURBIA

Ah Ah Ah Ay

The current crop of Santiago psychers – Föllakzoid, The Holydrug Couple *et al* – seem to owe as much to the ubiquitous Tame Impala as they do to Jimi Hendrix. But back in 1969 Chile was all about heavy-blues riffs and a sweet, stoned Frisco vibe. Their first album of mostly covers catches husband-and-wife-led Aguaturbia ("dirty water") at their wah-wah toting rawest.

Available on: *Aguaturbia* (Essex LP)



GEORGIE FAME

Sweet Thing

The title track-ish of Fame's '66 LP *Sweet Things* takes the already sublime Spinners original and angles the mirrors in such a way that the whole thing is just ablaze with sunlight. Here's a song to turn a day around, to make flowers burst from cracks in the pavement, to coax potential suicides back in from window ledges.

Available on: *The Whole World's Shaking: Complete Recordings 1963-66* (Universal box set)



MOTHER HEN

Mother Hen

Jane Getz – jazz pianist and session musician (Bee Gees, Lennon, Harry Nilsson, no less) – looked like Crystal Tipps and sang like The ISB's Licorice McKechnie fronting an eccentrically ramshackle country-rock band *a la* Earth Opera. Sparklingly recorded and lyrically intelligent, her 1971 debut on RCA under the name Mother Hen seems to have missed the clutches of dealers and is an utter delight.

Available on: RCA 1971 LP



THE KITCHEN CINQ

Determination

Released as a single and included on *Everything But...*, the group's sole long-player issued in mid-67 on Lee Hazlewood's LHI label. Originally from Texas they based themselves in LA, yet 'Determination' has everything required of a top drawer melodic Texas teen punker: a driving rhythm, vocal energy, mean fuzz guitar and a great pop sound that screams with urgency and intensity.

Available on: *When The Rainbow Disappears* (Light In The Attic CD)



BETTY EVERETT

God Only Knows

Everett was 20 years into her recording career when she cut this sumptuous version of The Beach Boys' 1966 crowning glory. Produced and arranged by Gene Page, it employs the slick, string-laden sound of much mid-70s soul without ever submerging Everett's vocal. And it manages to get the chords right! Parent album, *Happy Endings*, is worth investigating too.

Available on: *Here Today! The Songs Of Brian Wilson* (Ace CD)



GOSPELBEACH

Southern Girl

The mellowest moment from Brent Rademaker and friends' impressive debut, which both continues and furthers the West Coast sound he established so well with Beachwood Sparks. The incredible Neal Casal adds some fiery guitar breaks into this easy-going '70s ode, which comes off like a very stoned Steely Dan doing The Beach Boys circa *Holland*. Gorgeous.

Available on: *Pacific Surf Line* (Alive CD/LP)



ALICE COOPER

Under My Wheels

Penned by group members Bruce and Dunaway with producer Bob Ezrin, this basic rock 'n' roll number mixes brassy sax parts with driving bass and wheel screeching guitar to compliment Cooper's characteristically rough vocals. From the threateningly growled first line you know they mean business, on what was the first single release from Alice Cooper's fourth album, 1971's *Killer*.

Available on: *Killer* (Rhino CD)



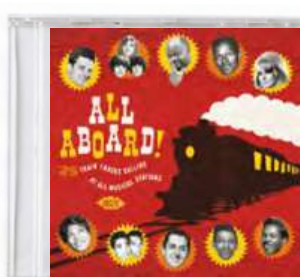
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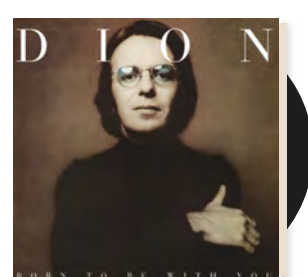
We reflect the incredible variety of train songs on this new compilation created by the team behind 2008's "Feline Groovy". "All Aboard!"



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CDCH2 1451 (2CD)

A 2CD set featuring three albums Link Wray recorded on his brother's farm in the early 70s. Radically different to what Link had previously recorded - raw and basic, but with vocals and acoustic instruments - these albums are the rarest of Link's catalogue.



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The much sought-after Phil Spector produced Dion album available on vinyl for the first time since its original release. A 180 gram release, with inserts that include a new interview with Dion.



REACHING OUT - CHESS RECORDS AT FAME STUDIOS

CDKEND 436

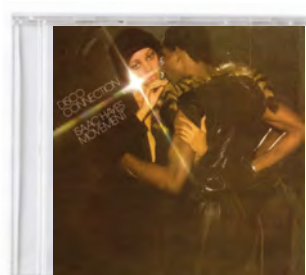
An overview of the 1967-69 southern soul sessions undertaken at FAME studios by Chess Records. Includes four previously unissued tracks.



MASTERPIECES OF MODERN SOUL VOLUME 4

CDKEND 437

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★ STAR LETTER

Jon,
 Over the last few issues (leaving aside the K***** issue, which I didn't read) you've reviewed several live albums that are effectively bootlegs as far as I can tell. In the issue 49 you review The Mahavishnu Orchestra's *Whisky A Go-Go 1972*. A quick look round the murkier corners of the internet can find it offered for downloading, along, I'm sure, with a pile of viruses and malware. The record company doesn't appear to have a website, but the press release claims it to be "re-mastered". The CD has hiss and a muffled sound that suggest it was mastered with the sound off. It seems unlikely that Mr McLaughlin and band are seeing any royalties from this release. The Renaissance and Byrds albums reviewed in your pages are other examples.

Does *Shindig!* have a policy on supporting artists being paid for their work? I would suggest that this sort of release benefits neither artist nor audience, one gets no payment, the other gets substandard material.

This issue of poor mastering isn't confined to live radio broadcasts warmed over as official releases. I bought the recent Aviator albums put out by Gonzo Multimedia and, comparing them to my old vinyl copies, find two songs cut off before their end and what can only be clicks from a scratched record on another. The sound quality varies from one song to the next as well. As a fan I'm happy to get the extra songs, but I am hugely disappointed in the quality as I doubt there will be the demand for another go at reissuing them. My emails to Gonzo have gone unanswered. Where many of the reissue labels do a brilliant job in working over old material the slapdash methods of others leaves a lot to be desired.

I know it is traditional to end a letter with a plea for an artist to be covered by *Shindig!* so here's mine, Bill Nelson. He's producing the best work of his life at present but has health issues that seem to have cut off his live work and may reduce his studio work as well. Talk to him and get the world (who lost track after Be Bop Deluxe) to look at some of his great recent albums.

Oh, and I am the *Shindig!* reader who likes Sky?

Tim Martin
 Clevedon Somerset

We feel your pain Tim. We do not intend to go out of our way to help nor condone the legions of bootleggers that function so readily in the world of our beloved music. We do, however, support and champion the known and trusted reissue labels at all times, as should our readers. If the label name is not known, proceed with caution. Have a copy of the new Faces box set for your troubles - all legit and above board, of course.



A MYSTERY TO ME

Dear Jon,

The overlooked era of Fleetwood Mac remains so in my eyes. To leave *Mystery To Me* and *Heroes Are Hard To Find* as a footnote to your otherwise excellent article was a tad disappointing. The two albums mentioned are my favourite Mac albums and I thought they deserved better coverage. Bob Welch, as you mentioned was a great artist, but I'm still waiting to read that one great story in a magazine to justify his talent.

Chris Triggs

I agree - great albums one and all. I wanted this piece to end with Kirwan leaving as I still believe the band took on a new sound after his dismissal. There's so much to cover though. Welch deserves a feature of his own don't you think?

NO REGRETS

Hi Jon,

Really excited to find out Tom Rush is playing Ogunquit, Maine when we're vacationing there on October 23rd, purely by chance. I missed him last time. Has Shinnors (as I affectionately call your wonderful mag) ever done a feature? I can't recall, but it would be of great interest if you haven't.

While there we'll be visiting The Record Exchange in Salem, Mass where, the great Barrence Whitfield works - nice review of his new album by the way. I have known Barrence for many years through visiting the shop, one of the best on the East Coast, and one of the nicest guys around.

Also recently been playing Jesse Colin Young albums, *Light Shine and Love On The Wing*, another singer songwriter that would be of interest to readers with his Youngbloods anthem 'Get Together' and 'Darkness Darkness'.

Really enjoyed latest edition #49 with Fleetwood Mac - checked out *Mystery To Me* again - and Dragons interview. Cheers,

Glenn Evans

Tom Rush is a great idea, as is Jesse Colin Young. We covered The Youngbloods some years back. Enjoy your break and please listen to the Mac's Future Games - my own pick.

MORE FOLKUS

Hi Jon,

Well what a good surprise, I found *Shindig!* again. Great - stay like that, please don't move. I am an avid reader since the beginning. I do miss the folk column by Jeanette though. Bring back this page again if you can. With it I discovered good acid-folk bands.

Like you said Jon, lay back and enjoy... but you forgot to add with a good beer!

Andre

I passed your message onto Lady J and she was most touched. She still covers new folk, but found that, as a genre, many acts had moved on.

AGENTE 077

Dear Jon,

I'm a huge Lydia MacDonald fan and was delighted to see that your magazine has run an article on this much neglected singer. I have been researching Lydia's life and work for a few years now and have managed, with the assistance of her nephew David Chillier (who kindly pointed out your article), to amass a fair bit of material which helps fill out the paucity of Lydia MacDonald information (photographs, discography etc).

I was interested to hear your podcast featuring Piero Piccioni's 'Abigaille'. This track did not feature on *Fumo Di Londra*. The track was the main theme for the movie *I Giovani Tigri*. The vocalist on the 'Abigaille' (main theme titles) track which you played *could be* Lydia MacDonald though. She must have made many uncredited appearances as a working singer (I have uncovered a fair few myself) as well as doing the "big film theme" numbers. She worked a lot for Piccioni and many others (Travalioli, Bacalov, Ferro, Umliliani, Morricone *et al*) as you will be aware, and her body of work is scattered across many soundtrack albums (I even found an Italian Library Music album with a vocal of hers on it!). Do you have any sources which confirm Lydia as the vocalist on the 'Abigaille' track? Please understand I am not being a pain in the backside about this... I am trying to pull together as comprehensive a discography as possible for this wonderful, warm and too little-known singer and any references/ sources for tracks I have missed would be most welcome.

All the best,

Lanark McVie

Glad you enjoyed the piece, we like to vary the type of singers we cover and Lydia was certainly worth reappraisal. 'Abigaille' was included on a '94 edition of Fumo... Good luck with your investigations.

BROTHER CHRIS

Hi Jon,

Loved the feature on The Chris Robinson Brotherhood, which pointed me in the direction of Chris Robinson & The New Earth Mud's *The Magnificent Distance*. As always, *Shindig!* sends me off on another musical journey of exploration. Currently enjoying your magazine sitting in a cottage overlooking Polzeath beach in Cornwall.

Mike Smith

Yes when discovering the Brotherhood I knew this was a band that had to be brought to the attention of our readers. So glad you like them too.

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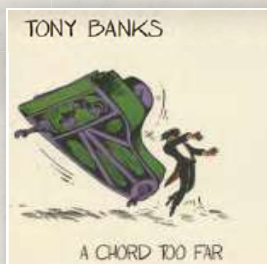


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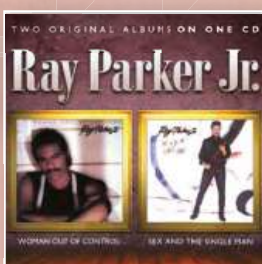
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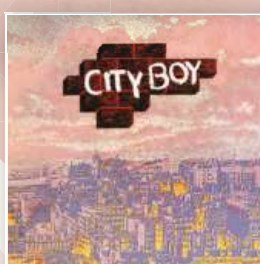
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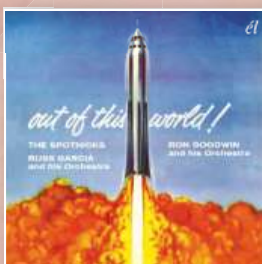
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IT'S A HAPPENING THING



Bach to the future. Nicolas Godin photographed in 2015

Photo by Thomas Humery

Second Hand Classical Culture

Since 1995, **NICOLAS GODIN**, as one half of **Air**, has released umpteen albums and singles of impeccable electronic retro-futurism. Now, two decades after **Air** first emerged onto a vibrant Parisian scene comes Godin's solo debut, **Contrepoint**, an album that takes the classical music of **Johann Sebastian Bach** and shapes it into intriguing new forms.

THOMAS PATTERSON gets switched on

“As a musician I don't see anyone else as good as Bach,” Godin tells me from his home in Paris about the intriguing genesis of *Contrepoint*. “For me, he's the God of music. I wanted to understand more about how his pieces work and how they're built and as a composer and musician I wanted to get better and improve by learning from him. And I'm getting older, I was feeling that I was limited musically and that I couldn't go further so I needed to go deeper into the source of music to learn new things.”

Indeed, it was this desire to improve musically, rather than any burning desire to break away from **Air** that led to Godin finally recording his solo debut.

“I never sat one morning and said ‘I'm going to make a solo record,’” he explains. “It was just about me saying to myself I want to play the words and keyboards of Bach, my own personal challenge. It was not supposed to make a record. But because I was not able to play it well, I had to make a record to express my ideas, because what I had in mind, I was not good enough technically to play it on a piano.”

The results are astonishing, an endlessly rewarding album that bends genres and defies easy categorisation, both somewhat confirming yet also minimising Godin's self-effacing statement “The only original thing I do is mix things together that are not supposed to be mixed together.” Indeed, the title *Contrepoint* both refers to Bach's habit of using different but interdependent harmonies and Godin's habit of mixing different forms and tones to inventive effect.

The spirits of greats like **Dave Brubeck** and **Glenn Gould** light up the album, infusing every twist Godin spins on Bach's originals – though the clearest influences on display alongside the German composer are legendary soundtrack artists like **Lalo Schifrin** and **Ennio Morricone**.

“The biggest influence in my career are soundtrack composers,” Godin confirms, “because as I grew up I was watching TV all day long and I learned from movies and TV shows and what I know is that those classical composers like **Ennio Morricone**, **John Barry**, **Nino Rota**, **Georges Delerue**, **Lalo Schifrin** and **John Williams**, they all have a classical background, so everything I know about classical music, I know from those guys, so it's like a second hand classical culture.

“I think I used Bach to do an homage to do all these great soundtrack composers,” he continues. “It's funny how you use someone to pay respect to other guys. It's very strange, it's just my earliest memories of music, they're just so strong in me, I just can't help let them appear when I'm recording.”

And, of course, the sensual French mood that courses through **Air**'s work is present, expanded to a pan-European vibe with the inclusion of songs in German and Italian – indeed, it takes skill to turn Bach's cantata ‘*Widerstehe Doch Der Sünde*’ into a song of erotic seduction but that's exactly what Godin has managed with the assistance of vocalists **Gordon Tracks** (aka **Thomas Mars**) and **Dorothee De Koon**. It's a tactile, carnal form of music that's a world away from traditional Anglo-accented pop.

“It's what we call continental music compared to English music, like pop music,” Godin says. “I think that's what we're good at, and if we try to sound like rock 'n' roll and pop, we sound ridiculous but if we do what we used to be good at before **Elvis Presley** and **The Beatles** showed up I'm



On stage with Air

“If we do what we used to be good at before **Elvis Presley and **The Beatles** showed up I'm sure we cannot miss”**

sure we cannot miss. That's what French people should do, we should focus on our heritage and our culture – all these great soundtrack composers in France and Italy, they were good, and I'm sure I can take it further and bring another brick to the wall.”

Godin will be taking *Contrepoint* out on the road in the near future, firstly with a small band but with plans to eventually expand to a full orchestra. **Air** will also return at some point, either playing old songs live or recording something new – if and when the right inspiration hits.

“With **Air**, we just need to come up with a great idea – I need a good reason to make a recording. We did some great albums and if we're going to make another one it has to be strong enough that we *have* to do it. I don't want to make a less good album than I did already”.

In the meantime, Godin will continue learning his craft and flexing his musical muscles. He has recently finished the soundtrack to a forthcoming film called *Taj Mahal* and he plans on using music to further explore the work of people he admires.

“In future, I will use music to know more about a subject,” he says. “This time it was Bach but next time I want it to be something else. I will use my gift to learn about something and I will make it sound like a record but it will be more my relationship with something that I really like.”

Although he already has a few possible candidates lined up, he refuses to name any of them. One thing is for certain – if they inspire him as much as Bach, the results will be extraordinary.



*Contrepoint is out now on **Because Music***

Rhythm 'n' Booze

Self-proclaimed Hermits On Holiday CATE LE BON and White Fence's TIM PRESLEY take a break from their regular musical activities to pursue their new "solo project", DRINKS.

We ask them to tell us about the records that helped cement their musical union, with typically beguiling results

First up, Cate...

Faust

Faust V (Virgin LP, 1975)

This album is the pinnacle of everything an album should be. It is equal parts playful, exciting, beautiful, abrasive and bizarre. I had never been able to definitively answer the question, "If you had to pick a favourite album, what would it be?" until I happened upon this. I am as captivated by it now as I was when I first heard it. When Tim told me that it too was his most perfect album I knew we were going to be just fine.

"When Tim told me that it too was his most perfect album I knew we were going to be just fine"

Fille Qui Mousse

Se Taire Pour Une Femme Trop Belle

(Mellow CD, 1994 - recorded 1971)

I picked this album up at Permanent Records in Eagle Rock purely on their recommendation for lovers of *Faust V*. It is musical assemblage. There is no map. It's the sound of the most wonderful scribble on the back of a foreign newspaper. I was excited like a teen to play this to Tim. I invited him over the house specifically to do so and we drank milkshakes and talked about boys.

Tronics

What's The Hubub Bub (M'Lady CD, 2001)

On an East Coast White Fence tour last fall we had a marathon drive from a College Town in upstate New York back to the city. I took the wheel under the proviso that Tim was co-pilot and DJ. He played this album for me and I was immediately transfixed and almost furious that I hadn't heard it before. I don't remember the drive, just the songs. It's directness is potent and a lesson in cutting out all the superfluous nonsense. It's an important reference point for that in the studio.

Young Marble Giants

Colossal Youth (Rough Trade LP, 1980)

This is another magnificently sparse album and a reminder that punk isn't formulaic. Its presence can be in what's omitted. Abruptness is king. Tim hadn't heard this album before and I hadn't visited it for a while so it was nice to do it together and be equally as inspired by it.

Various Artists

Punk 45: There is No Such Thing As Society

(Soul Jazz 2-LP, 2014)

This compilation worked a treat on me. It reignited my love for scrappy guitar music. I am a self-proclaimed punk now, whatever that means. This is very much Tim's domain and when I told him that I was listening to it he spouted off a million bands I should listen to next. We had a very teenage time listening to punk together. Better late than never. He tells me he'll take me to a punk show but I have a bad back.

Now it's Tim's turn...

Datblygu

Amheuron Corfforol

(Casetiau Neon cassette, 1982)

A truly incredible Welsh band. Cate showed me this and I immediately started researching everything about them. She tells me they hold the record for most Peel Sessions. Datblygu was crucial for us with our writing process for the Drinks record. One of us would mess around with a Casio, while the other played bass or guitar. It's groups like this that are very inspiring to me, seemingly simple, poetic, melodic and unrestricted.

Mayo Thompson

Corky's Debt To His Father

(Texas Revolution LP, 1970)

This is one of my all time favourite albums, and I played it for Cate on a whim. I figured with the way the Drinks record was going, this would be a good record to take in. It's loose yet calculated, which suited our frame of mind. I always come back to this record. It's an endless pool of vision and mystery.

The Nixe

The Nixe (Rock Against Records EP, 1981)

Whilst this isn't an album, it carried the weight of one when it came to inspiration for our record. Another one I thought Cate would love, seeing as she is a punk now. There are moments vocally that made me think if Cate had a punk band it may sound a bit like this. The nonchalant lyrics and delivery were fetching to us both.

"There are moments vocally that made me think if Cate had a punk band it may sound a bit like this"

Lou Miami

Rituals (Throbbing Lobster LP, 1985)

I played this to Cate on another mammoth tour drive and she loved it so much I bought it for her for Christmas. She still calls him Louie Miami though, which is not his name. I think we're both attracted to the repetitious guitar lines that underpin his songs. In particular 'Dancing With Death' is the same riff throughout. Any small flourishes added on top are amplified by the monotony.

Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers

The Greatest Hits (MCA LP, 1993)

No listening session was ever complete without a visit from TP. He ignites something in us both that cannot be quashed. Sometimes you have to let your songs go where they want and sometimes they want to go to the Petty zoo.



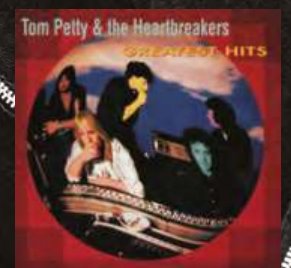
Hermits On Holiday is out now on Heavenly.

Drinks is on tour in the UK now and the US in October.

Alcopop music. Tim Presley and Cate Le Bon AKA Drinks



Photo by Cara Robbins



Asterisk The Gaul

As **SIMON LOVE** unleashes his solo debut, *It Seemed Like A Good Idea At The Time*, **PAUL OSBORNE** is treated to a hilarious insight into the mind of a unique songwriter

Simon Love rose to prominence in the 2000s as front man of Welsh indie darlings, The Loves – a band that built up a loyal and devoted following with its unique take on the sounds of The Kinks, Velvets and classic '60s pop. Following their demise he's now ready to step back into the limelight and showcase his debut solo, *It Seemed Like A Good Idea At The Time*. A wonderful collection of witty, sometimes stinging vignettes tackling the absurdities of love and relationships, it's uniquely British in its delivery (with some of the most creative uses of obscenities this writer has heard in a long time) but all set to a musical backing which references Harry Nilsson, McCartney's best solo work and the cream of late '60s and '70s rock and pop. We caught up with Love to get his take on the making of the record, collaborating with Stewart Lee and the use of profanity in song.

Shindig!: Was the progression from The Loves to putting together your own record a natural one? Did your experiences with the band mean it was an easier process having full control and did you have a very clear idea of what you wanted to do before you started writing?

Simon Love: It was natural in the sense that The Loves was never "a band". I ruled the group with an iron fist, a wooden leg and a piece of string. In truth I probably shouldn't have broken The Loves up. I started another group straight afterwards called Knickers with an eye to making \$\$\$\$. I put an advert on Gumtree for a French girl singer and I got one and she was amazing. We got an EP released on the Spanish label Elefant but my girlfriend at the time was a psycho-hose beast and didn't like it so it crumbled soon after. After that lucrative dream ended, I came across a badge I found on the floor of the nightclub Metro's in Cardiff that read, "From Now On, We Fuck Things Up My Way" and that became my mantra. For a while that was going to be the LP title. The band was also going to be called Simon Love's Cock And Balls as a homage (of sorts) to Noel Gallagher's High Flyin' Birds.

SD!: It's a fantastic album. It pulls off the same trick as the Father John Misty record in that you've managed to write an album about love that maintains a sense of humour about the absurdity of it, without resorting to the same tired old clichés; something that most songwriters seem unable to do. Was that something you were conscious of when writing and were there any songs that proved more difficult than others to get right?

SL: I was really flattered by that comparison. I only heard his LP about two months ago and have been espousing its amazingness to everyone since. Writing this LP, I didn't edit anything that came out. Whereas before, I

would've attempted to make things radio-friendly (which has served me so well in the past), this time I left all my weirdness in. And the swearing. 'Don't Get The Gurl No More' starts with part of the original instrumental demo I made for it in 2005, so that one has been gestating for 10 years. The rest of the songs were a mixture of things I wrote for Knickers and unfinished bits and bobs. It was only when I assembled them that they seemed to make some sense. It's strange looking back on the LP with today's hindsight. When I was writing and making it, I was in what I thought was a happy relationship, but now I see I was miserable and it was all coming out in the songs. You don't write a song like "**** (Is A Dirty Word)" when you're content. 'Elton John' was written after I read a biography of him. There was a chapter about his wife Renate and what he (allegedly) did on the eve of his wedding night but now I see it as a metaphor for being fucked about by someone you trusted.

SD!: Musically, this definitely seems to be a major step forward from your previous work. Who were the artists or albums that had an impact on the album?

**"You don't write a song like
**** (Is A Dirty Word)" when
you're content"**

SL: I would say the main influences stylistically were Biff Rose's *The Thorn In Mrs Rose's Side*, Nilsson *Schmilsson* and *Ram* by Paul and Linda McCartney. Another aspect of the sound of overall togetherness of this LP is owed to Sean from Fortuna Pop who made me drop two songs and actually did some record company business in re-ordering the songs. The only problem is now he's done that and been proved right, he thinks he's right about everything.

SD!: Great Macca cover. Why did you choose that particular tune?

SL: I was a big McCartney-was-shit-after-The-Beatles person for ages until one night I came across "Too Many People" from *Ram* and sat bolt upright and breathless. Then I downloaded the LP. Then I bought a copy. Then I bought another copy. And then another. At the moment I have about seven. I'm still looking to get the box set of it. I'm also now a massive Wings fan. I chose 'Dear Boy' because it's one of the few on there that didn't sound finished to me. Paul's song seemed to sum up everything I wanted to say a lot more succinctly.

SD!: How did the Stewart Lee collaboration come about?

SL: I met him about 10 years ago through The

Loves' then bassist/funny lady Danielle Ward at ace '60s night, The 13th Floor. I talked to him about Bob Dylan in The Albany's decaying toilets for about an hour and ever since then whenever I've seen him out and about he asked me what I was up to. When I came up with the idea for 'The Meaning Of Love' and knew I needed a narrator I first asked Bruce Campbell via his website but Bruce said, "Unfortunately this is not something I'm looking for at the moment. Thanks, BC." Then I asked Stewart and he said, "I would be delighted to do that." I thought I had a coup getting him on record but he'd already appeared on an LP by Evans The Death. He was only crying on that one though. For the recording he came in and did 12 different versions including one as his Baconface alter ego.

SD!: Ten out of 10 for the profanity count. Has your mum heard the album?

SL: She has. My entire family has. They all came to a show I did in Cardiff last Easter. Afterwards my Auntie Sheila said she was in tears at 'Elton John'. This led to the legend on the back of the LP for my grandparents, who died during the making of the record (though not as a result of it being made, I hasten to add): "This LP is dedicated to Beryl Stone, who wouldn't have cared for the language, and Eloy Rodrigues, who wouldn't have been able to hear it."

SD!: Any idea of where you want to go next musically? Do you have plans to follow up this album quickly?

SL: I'm looking forward to playing loads more shows this year. I love playing live and attempt to make each show different which mainly involves me giving in-between song monologues that last longer than the songs themselves. I'm going to record a few songs this month with A Little Orchestra, who did all the strings on the LP, which should see the light of day next spring in some sort of release.

In terms of a second LP (currently titled *F-U-S-S*), I've got about six songs written and there'll be two cover versions on it: one Bob Dylan and one Alex Hale, both songwriters I hold in high esteem. My main influences for these songs are The Smiths (who I've previously hated but, after reading Morrissey's autobiography, I heard *Strangeways Here We Come* and realised I was wrong... sort of), Silver Jews, Ronnie Lane and Wings. If you can imagine such a thing, I want to get everything recorded at once early next year, I could have another record out by Christmas 2016, weather permitting.



It Seemed Like A Good Idea At The Time is out now on Fortuna Pop



William Tell, It Was Really Nothing. Simon Love: sort of wrong about Macca and The Smiths

The Big And The Bold

PAUL OSBORNE meets DIANE COFFEE, the ambitious wunderkind behind one of this year's great albums... and a lot more besides

Shaun Fleming has enjoyed a colourful and interesting career to date and, as well as his role as drummer for *Shindig!* favourites Foxygen, he's also enjoyed a successful career as a voice actor for kids' cartoons. But it's on the solo records that he's released as alter ego Diane Coffee that he's found his true calling. If his debut, *My Friend Fish*, set a standard for inventive and imaginative pop music, then its follow-up, *Everybody's A Good Dog*, raises the bar even higher. It's an ambitious, beautifully realised

record that draws on the best popular music of the last 60 years to create a richly layered mix of rock, soul, sunshine-pop, psychedelia and lush orchestration. It's a huge leap forward in sound for him, and with good reason. "With *Everybody's A Good Dog* I was finally able to get into a proper studio and spend a considerable amount of time writing at home," explains Fleming. "I wanted everything for this album: strings, horns, lush harmonies, heavy guitars. I wanted to create something that was fully realised and well thought out. I gave myself a

three-month deadline for writing. The recording and mixing, however, took around 10 months due to tours with Foxygen."

Listening to the album you'll hear familiar touchstones (opener 'Spring Breathes' is undeniably touched by the hand of Brian Wilson), but there's a sense that Fleming's influences are wide reaching and serve as step off points from which he can create something that's unique to his vision. "I thought a lot about Joe Cocker on this album. He was always

"I think you can write and sing any way you like. I've just always been a fan of the big and bold"

such a dynamic powerhouse. Joe and Sam Cooke mostly. Also, the *Hedwig* soundtrack. I'd say if there was anyone that's really stayed with me, though, it would be Donovan. He was the first musician I was ever fascinated by."

Shindig! asks if there's a tendency in some musicians to shy away from pop music in favour of being cool. "I think you can write and sing any way you like," says Fleming. "It's still a valid form of art. I've just always been a fan of the big and bold. Whether it be pop music or any other."

Does he see any similarities to his approach to his own music and that of Foxygen? "I'd say it's pretty separate. I've never actually seen how Sam and Rado make music so I can't really speak to that. I think I still approach writing in the same way I always have. That much hasn't really changed."

The next step for Fleming is to get back to live performance. Will he be using a big band to replicate the grand sounds contained on the album? "The set up right now is pretty standard: guitars, keyboard, drums. We end up comping a lot of the string and horn lines for our live set. We have it down pretty well, I'd love a chance to tour with a brass band or a string ensemble though." After the tour there'll hopefully be some new music to digest. "At some point I'd like to record with a full orchestra and choir. Something very 'Georgia On My Mind' or 'A Change Is Gonna Come'. I've also been toying around with a very synth Moon Pop album. More on that soon."

Whatever's next, we can't wait.

Everybody's A Good Dog is out now on Western Vinyl

Shaun Fleming AKA Diane Coffee seeing the world through rose-coloured glasses



Trash And Treasure

IT'S A HAPPENING THING

JOHN WATERS' trash oeuvre is being given the veneer of respectability with a season at The BFI. JEANETTE LEECH is already queueing

In the pink, John Waters wrestles with his flamingo; Divine on a lobby card for 1974 fan's favourite, *Female Trouble* (inset)



Yes, it's true. We'll get Divine severing an umbilical chord with her teeth, Divine getting raped by a giant lobster, David Lochary performing a bird foot transplant on Mary Vivien Pearce, and an anus miming 'Surfin' Bird'. Bravo!

John Waters has celebrated the marginal and the extreme in American culture like no-one before or since. Almost uniquely, he brought the underground New York cinema aesthetic to the mad-eyed end of Hollywood (think *Sunset Boulevard* and Joan Crawford), while also being influenced by the *schlock* directors William Castle, Russ Meyer, and Herschell Gordon Lewis. "These assorted sluts, fags, dykes and pimps know no bounds," says the carnival barker for the 'Cavalcade Of Perversion' in 1970's *Multiple Maniacs*. "They have committed acts against God and nature, acts that by their mere existence would make any decent person recoil in disgust."

What's especially vital about the BFI season is that it will screen, for the first time in the UK, Waters' early late '60s short films – *Hag In A Black Leather Jacket*, *Roman Candles* and *Eat Your Make-up*. Waters has always guarded these juvenilia, although he's given fans tantalizing insights into what the films might actually be like. *Roman Candles*, he claims, was not edited because of his filmmaking naïveté: Waters thought what was filmed was the movie itself. And *Eat Your Makeup* contains an entirely taste-free re-enactment of the JFK assassination, featuring Divine as Jackie Kennedy.

These all pre-date Waters' first feature, '69's fantastic *Mondo Trasho*, which will also have a rare big-screen outing. What has traditionally hampered its distribution is the soundtrack – completely unlicensed use of teen pop, surf, and rock 'n' roll. *Pink Flamingos*, that cultest of

cult films and a centerpiece of the season, also features a heavily ironic score. Who can forget Patti Page sweetly intoning 'How Much Is That Doggie In 'The Window' while Divine redefines the phrase, shit-eating grin?

Fan favourite *Female Trouble* is another delight, the anarchic tale of teenage Dawn Davenport (Divine, of course) who rebels against her parents when she's not given a pair of 'cha-cha heels' to embark on myriad wanton misadventures. *Hairspray*, Waters' most commercial film, will also be screened. Far



"He brought the underground New York cinema aesthetic to the mad-eyed end of Hollywood"

from a diluted sell-out, it repositions Waters' unique take on American society into one of the most irresistible films of the '80s.

Placing the John Waters filmography in an establishment space such as The BFI rather than a midnight movie theatre or on grainy VHS will be an interesting experiment. Will chin-stroking about Waters' suburban satire crush the black comedy of *Polyester*? Will the words "polymorphous perversity" take the fun out of *Desperate Living*? What might Divine say about being in the heartland of film academia? "Kill everyone now! Condone first degree murder! Advocate cannibalism! Eat shit! Filth is my politics! Filth is my life!"

It Isn't Very Pretty: The Complete Films Of John Waters (Every Goddamn One Of Them...) runs at BFI Southbank from 1st September to 6th October

Les Couleurs Originelles



Better in black. Whyte Horses with Dom Thomas, top right

Photo by John Shard

In the spirit of the crate-digging culture that birthed them, the enigmatic WHYTE HORSES have just pre-released their debut album as an extremely limited edition vinyl-only private pressing. ANDY MORTEN hears what head Horse DOM THOMAS has to say

“Whyte Horses was an imaginary band conceived in my head during a depressing Manchester day sat in a car park with grey skies looming above,” begins Dom Thomas on the provenance of his current musical project. “About three years ago I was having this recurring idea of a desert pop band playing in a church in Mexico. So, initially, Whyte Horses was going to be this group of girls playing this new genre of music, but I reconnected with my old friend, Julie Margat, and we started to write material and dig into our old songs and it just took off from there.”

The first fruit of this collaboration was last year’s ‘The Snowfalls’ 45, a charming slice of retro-futurist pop no less informed and insightful than you’d expect from one of the founding fathers of hipper-than-thou Manchester record label Finders Keepers Records and its attendant B-Music club night. “The songs take a long time to get right, we get quite obsessive,” he continues. “I really think we’re trying to make something that we can believe in, because I was becoming increasingly despondent with what was out there; bored of thinking ‘I could do better than that.’ I think it’s a dour time for music, like a musical recession. The problem is everything has been done. I hear people attributing tags like ‘modern’ to songs, but to me they sound older than music Joe Meek was making in the early ’60s. It’s all been done before.”

Clearly warming to his theme, Dom is eloquent and confident in his diagnosis of music-making

“I think Whyte Horses will just try and exist on our own plane. We genuinely don’t want to be affiliated with anyone or anything”

in 2015. “The advent of the internet has nurtured the ethos of sharing music, which in turn has backfired and made everything disposable and, to a point, worthless. It’s turned too many people into music critics. We have websites marking people with decimal points in their reviews. It’s like the joy has been sucked out of music. I think [Whyte Horses] will just try and exist on our own plane. We genuinely don’t want to be affiliated with anyone or anything, at this moment in time.”

If you’re looking for the true definition of independent, then you can probably stop looking right there. In the meantime, let’s talk about the sights and sounds that have gone into the crafting of Whyte Horses. Surely a man who spends most days listening to often very obscure music for a living should be drawing on an enormous spectrum and knowledge. “The *White Horses* theme [by Jackie Lee], in my opinion, is one of the greatest, most succinct pieces of pop ever written. It probably affected our name in some way but I wasn’t thinking about it at the time. People might think our record sounds like certain records but we’re not a ’60s band; our music hasn’t been done before. We’re more of a stray cat. It’s got

guitars but it’s got a lot more going on too. It’s about a specific type of feeling, a desperation to try and print those hazy childhood sensations musically and honestly. Every song has to give you a feeling. We believe there has to be care when borrowing from the past, it should be done with taste and a forward-looking purpose.”

But still, there are clearly some sonic touchstones. “The main influence on the record was imagery and a loose story. There’s a Salvador Dali documentary that we had on repeat, the one Orson Welles narrates. Finding that was a pivotal moment; in a way it brought our ideas into focus. *Os Mutantes* are a great band who shaped their records the way they wanted regardless of a ‘sound’; they let every song speak for itself without having to sound like ‘*Os Mutantes*’.”

There’s no denying the rare artistic integrity at work in the way Whyte Horses see themselves and their place in today’s pantheon of DIY music makers. “It’s purely about making albums for me,” Dom concludes, “that’s the test. Not just one great song. It’s about crafting a set of songs that can last forever. I want people to be able to put the record on from start to finish and listen to it as an album, that’s how it’s designed.”

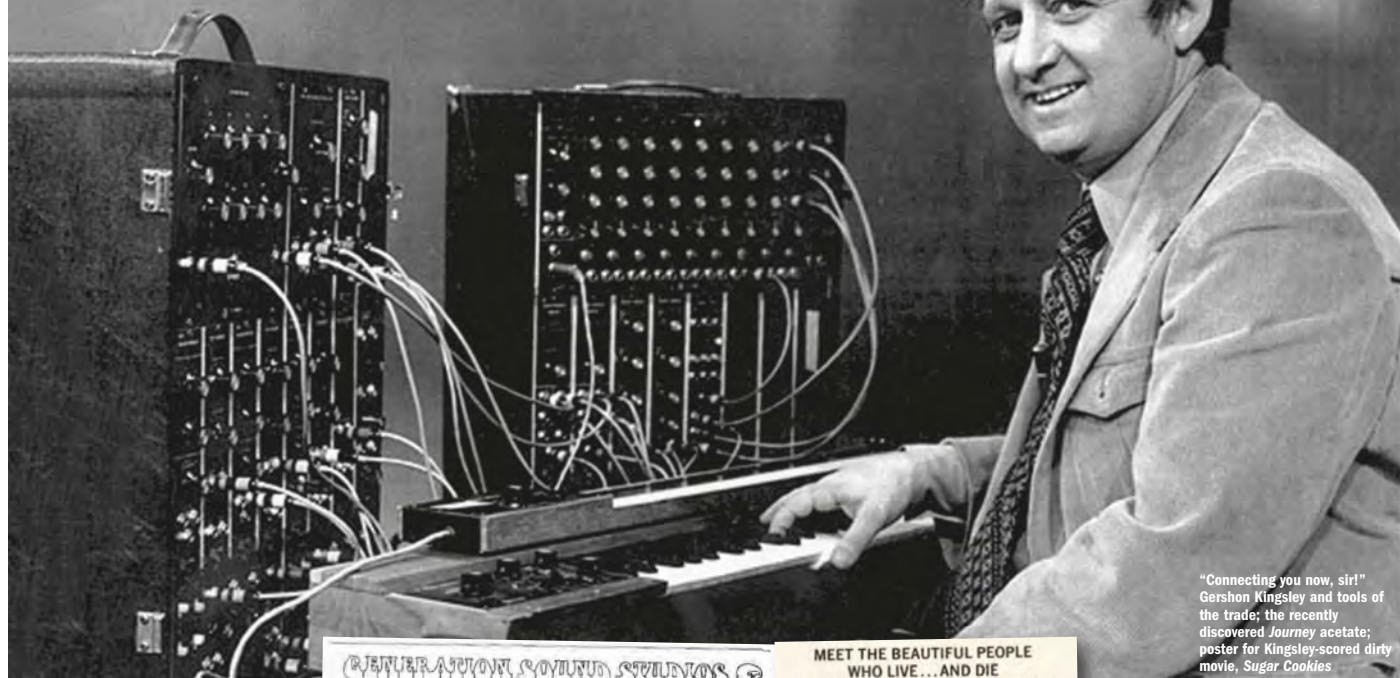


Pop Or Not is out now exclusively from whytehorses.tumblr.com

Journey's End

IT'S A HAPPENING THING

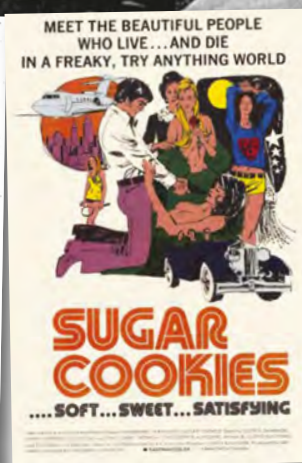
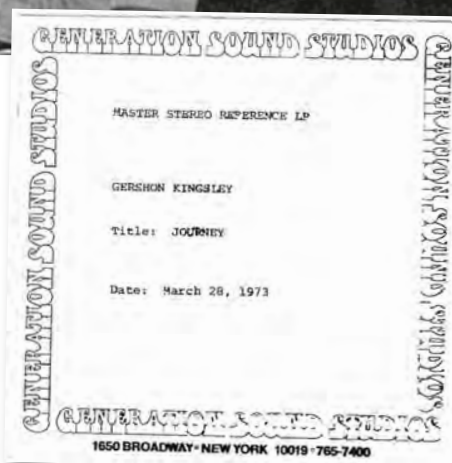
RHYS JONES uncovers a once-lost early '70s album by Moog pioneer and 'Popcorn' writer, GERSHON KINGSLEY



"Connecting you now, sir!" Gershon Kingsley and tools of the trade; the recently discovered *Journey* acetate; poster for Kingsley-scored dirty movie, *Sugar Cookies*

Amongst the numerous Moog pioneers, Gershon Kingsley is perhaps the most versatile. Since parting ways with Jean-Jacques Perrey after their collaborations on the Vanguard label, Kingsley's solo output along with his collaborative works with The First Moog Quartet explored the endless possibility of the Moog. This culminated in hitting musical pay dirt when Hot Butter released a version of the ubiquitous Moog theme, 'Popcorn' (a staple of numerous budget Moog novelty records that had appeared on The First Moog Quartet's eponymous debut) in 1972. After 'Popcorn' composition becoming an unexpected hit internationally, major label offers should have flooded in. However this wasn't the case. What follows is an overview of Gershon Kingsley's private press output as well as those that have yet to materialise.

At an early age Kingsley had converted to Judaism, and incorporated cutting edge electronic music and funk with secular Jewish rituals to create a body of interesting (if not overlooked) albums. His privately pressed LPs, *Shabbat 68* ('68), *Shabbat Of Today* ('69) and the Theodore Bikel narrated *5th Cup: A Spirit Explosion* (circa '71) expanded on the incorporation of the rock idiom and Jewish Music explored by David Axelrod on The Electric Prunes' *Release Of An Oath*. In '73



"Kingsley takes 'Windmills Of Your Mind' and re-arranges it as an electronic eerie-folk masterclass; both pastoral and industrial"

Kingsley created two pieces of music: the first a Moog-heavy soundtrack to *Sugar Cookies*, a softcore film for Lloyd Kauffman's Troma stable (co-produced by none other than Oliver Stone) and the second an acetate recently discovered by yours truly, called *Journey*.

The music on this LP is nothing short of breath-taking, encompassing all major facets of left field music making in the early '70s. The slinky funk of previous Moog Quartet recordings is present, as are the ethereal and

experimental female vocal stylings (the refrain of 'Come On A Journey' is reminiscent of Linda Perhacs' *Parallelograms* or Annette Peacock's *I'm The One*). Kingsley also revisits other tracks from the Moog Quartet catalogue, namely the Ronee Blakely-fronted 'Miracles' (sampled by artists such as Luke Vibert, Black Milk and Quakers). Cover versions are also given drastic reworkings in true Kingsley fashion as he takes the Bergman/Legrand staple, 'Windmills Of Your

Mind', and re-arranges it as an electronic eerie-folk masterclass; both pastoral and industrial at the same time. Show tunes are also re-worked to within an inch of their lives, with *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* 'Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend' resembling vulgar proto-punk vaudeville.

A drastic departure to the all-Moog compositions found on the *Popcorn* album, *Journey* went no further than the acetate stage. Audio Fidelity (Kingsley's label at time) probably wanting an easily accessible all-Moog outing similar to his last hit more than an audio maelstrom of genre-bending concepts. The record languished in dust-covered obscurity until it was rediscovered a few months ago.

Any further information regarding this great lost album would be most welcome.

Under The Counter

THE DRIFT RECORD SHOP is the jewel in the crown of Devon's beautiful new-age mecca, Totnes.

Manager Rupert Morrison draws *Shindig!* in



Specific drift. Inside the shop; owner Rupert Morrison (inset)

The Shop

"Drift has been in our bigger new home for three and a bit years (we opened on April Fools Day), but we were based at our more compact former home since 1995, give or take. We used to rent VHS tapes of world cinema and stock a bunch of Latin jazz, but I got involved when I was about 16 and gradually started pushing for more and more music. I think The Strokes' *Is This It* was the first time I convinced people we could actually sell a lot of records."

The Philosophy

"Listening to everything, pick the good stuff as neutrally as possible and display everything in a way that makes it impossible not to want to invest. It struck on me years ago that nobody was really merchandising record shops like other shops, you wouldn't hit a jeans shop and find them all shoved into boxes. Records and music in general is such an easy sell if you can get people through the door, get them completely overwhelmed by the artwork and majesty of seeing something that they might have considered antiquated."

The most popular stock

"We're lucky, people seem to follow us wherever we go... which we don't take



advantage of, we take curation pretty seriously. We've had really big success this year with Sufjan Stevens, Father John Misty, Unknown Mortal Orchestra, Jamie XX, Bjork, Courtney Barnett... then slightly more left

field with releases by Holly Herndon, Kamasi Washington, Lightning Bolt, The Cairo Gang, Viet Cong and Tobias Jesso Jr That list is pretty diverse. Reissue wise we're still totally in love with Light In The Attic and Numero – those guys are such amazing record archaeologists. The Led Zeppelin and Joy Division LP reissues keep selling strong... life in the old dogs yet."

The *Deluxe* music paper

"I thought it was funny if I'm honest. We've been involved in loads of projects out at SXSW, so one year, as my work load was lighter, I decided the most decadent thing I could do was create a newspaper dedicated to record shops... turns out people liked reading about them as much as I liked writing about them. So we just continue reaching out to artists and it's not hard to get them interested... 'Do you like Record shops? Why?'"

thedriftrecordshop.net

IT'S A HAPPENING THING

GOOD NEWS

Shindig! favourite **Jacco Gardner** curates Cabinet Of Curiosities, a segment of the Le Guess Who? festival in Utrecht, Netherlands on Sunday 22nd November, with live appearances from the legendary Os Mutantes, Swedish psych-rockers Dungen, Michael Rault (recently covered in these pages) and transplanted Brit baroque folkie Nick Garrie among others. leguesswho.nl

It's mod madness all the way with box sets from both **The Small Faces** and **Georgie Fame** imminent. *The Decca Years* promises five CDs of rarities and BBC sessions alongside the Faces' complete 1965/66 recordings; the four-LP or expanded five-CD *The Whole World's Shaking: Complete Recordings 1963-66* is similarly self-explanatory.

The Liverpool International Festival Of Psychedelia 2015 takes place on September 25th and 26th and boasts an impressive line-up that includes Spiritualised, Anton Newcombe, The Heads, Hookworms, Jacco Gardner and the usual array of multi-media events including Finders Keepers DJs and Cardinal Fuzz Records showcase. liverpoolpsychfest.com

Donovan celebrates 50 years of making records with his first UK tour in 10 years, kicking off on October 3rd at The Glasgow Pavilion and winding up at London's Cadogan Hall on the 31st. He promises all the hits as well as rarities, cult songs and his "legendary story-telling". donovan.ie

One of the most surprising reunions of 2015 is that of **Trader Horne**, the short-lived acid-folk duo comprising Jackie McAuley (ex-Them) and Judy Dyble (ex-Fairport Convention), who will celebrate Earth Records' reissue of their sole album, 1970's *Morning Way*, by performing it in its entirety at London's Bush Hall on November 29th. earthvinyl.com

ERRATUM:

Last issue's review of The Pretty Things' new album should, of course, have carried four stars, not three. The minion concerned has been played.

NEXT ISSUE

SLADE

'N Between the '60s and stardom
TASTE

Rory Gallagher's blues-rockers

THE FLIRTATIONS

Brit pop-soul... US style!

AIR

French electronica and beyond
GEORGIE FAME

On 50+ years of rhythm 'n' soul

Plus... Geranium Pond, Mercury Rev,
Powder, Water Into Wine Band,
news, reviews and hullabaloo!

Published 22nd October

double sight

'15

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SHINDIG!
www.shindig-magazine.com

Shindig!'s 50th Birthday Party

To celebrate both *Shindig!* magazine and The Pretty Things having turned 50, Rough Trade East is hosting a special party with DJs and a live set and record signing from The Pretty Things, in celebration of their brilliant new album, *The Sweet Pretty Things (Are In Bed Now, Of Course...)*. The event will be the first opportunity to buy the album on vinyl.

Why not come along on Thursday 8th October between 7 and 9 pm. A wristband will be given to the first 50 people who pre-order *Shindig!* from Rough Trade East. This will entitle them to free entrance to the event, and also a free, limited edition *Shindig!* tote bag. The Pretty Things will be ready and willing to sign vinyl editions of the new album.

It's a big day for us, so please try and come along, share a drink with the team and witness The Pretty Things as they continue to put so many of the young guns to shame with their enviable stagecraft.

Rough Trade East, Old Truman Brewery, 91 Brick Lane, London, E1 6QL

www.roughtrade.com/events/2015/10/1582



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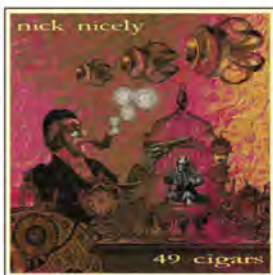


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Praise be for GospelbeachH. Brent Rademaker, second right

GospelbeachH

JON 'MOJO' MILLS' album of the moment from the easy-going new act led by American journeyman BRENT RADEMAKER

"I really just wanna grow my moustache and play some rock 'n' roll," says the flaxen-haired Brent Rademaker, the man behind Beachwood Sparks, Further and The Tyde. Having left music all but behind and relocated from California to his native Florida, the steady formation of new band GospelbeachH happened quite by accident. And with no master plan.

In 2014 Rademaker started jamming in his Crabshack Studio with the Sparks' old drummer Tom Sanford. "There was no band, no name, no record deal. Then we started writing songs together – and the songs we were coming up with were telling stories, about people I knew and places where I grew up. We began exploring the kind of collaboration that we hadn't really done since the early days of Beachwood Sparks, and the joy returned. And my little gang of two with Tom became the foundation for what would become the band."

After returning to LA a group of musicians soon metamorphosed around the multi-talented and very busy guitarist Neal Casal (who as well as having played with the Sparks

and The Grateful Dead survivors in Furthur has also made a number of solo albums, had a long stint with Ryan Adams & The Cardinals, and is currently making music with The Chris Robinson Brotherhood) alongside the induction of bassist Kip Boardman and guitarist Jason Soda, who had previously played together in The Watson Twins. All schooled to

"That was what was missing in the Sparks: the support of each other for all the good vibes in the songs"

PhD level in American Cosmic Music the band gelled, culminating in regular live shows in California and the forthcoming debut album *Pacific Surf Line*. "When Neal, Kip and Jason came on board we just inspired each other. That was what was missing in the Sparks: the support of each other for all the good vibes in the songs."

Of course, fans of Beachwood Sparks will adore GospelbeachH, but there are differences, as Rademaker points out: "GospelbeachH is a rock 'n' roll band with more humour and fun. There's more lead guitar too, which I love!" This writer also hears a wider canvass: 'Southern Girl' bridges Steely Dan and The Beach Boys, 'Out Of My Mind' channels mid-70s Canterbury scamp Kevin Ayers drunk on Californian wine (and coke and weed). Touching on not only country-rock, there are regular forays into sunshine-pop, soft-rock and beyond. When questioned about was being listened to over the gestation period of the album Rademaker eagerly rolls of a fitting list: "*Sandinista* (The Clash), *Future Games* (Fleetwood Mac), McGuinn, Clark & Hillman, Souther, Hillman & Furay. Lotsa sailboat rock: Little River Band, Bread. Many records from the AM radio days of my youth in the '70s. Same stuff as always. Classic rock, the Dead, Free, Foreigner, Boston, Jackson Browne, ELO, The Beach Boys, The Zombies, Wings."

Hopefully the rest of the world will get to experience this warm-hearted band soon. "Who knows what's next?" chuckles Rademaker. "We've been approached to tour overseas, but we want to wait until the record is out so everybody knows the songs. We are just playing in California right now, getting our shit together. It's really fun playing live... this wasn't supposed to happen, but I'm stoked that it has!"

Pacific Surf Line is out on Alive Naturalsound Records in October

Nathaniel Rateliff

PAUL OSBORNE talks to **NATHANIEL RATELIFF** about his new direction and becoming part of the Stax Records legacy

"I'm sure some people will be surprised and some may not like the new direction of the record. But we are really happy with it and it's something I've always wanted to do." So says Nathaniel Rateliff when *Shindig!* asks him about how those familiar with his previous releases might react when hearing his fantastic new album, *Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats*.

Although Rateliff has already established himself as a master of thoughtful folk and country confessionals, for this record he's shown another side as a master of southern soul, employing a seven piece band (the aforementioned Night Sweats) and amping things up to deliver a raucous mix of country and soul music which brings to mind Otis Redding, Sam & Dave and The Band's finer moments.

The sheer joy apparent in some of the songs (such as the album's gospel infused centrepiece, 'S.O.B.') makes it sound like the band was having a blast recording them. "All the tracks are live takes," explains Rateliff, "not full band takes – just good takes without moving and editing the

hell out of the track. We recorded a song a day and it took a couple of weeks."

Contributing to the sound and feel of the album was production maestro and *Shindig!* favourite, Richard Swift. "I was playing the demos that I'd recorded at home for Jenna Conrad, who had played with Damien Jurado for

years and was playing with me at the time," says Nathaniel. "She suggested sending the songs to Richard. So I did and he got back to me and said he was digging the tunes and wanted to work together. I headed out to Oregon and we hit it off right away."

As if to cement the album's credentials it's being released on the rejuvenated Stax label, which is something that clearly pleases him, "I'm overwhelmed to be apart of the amazing list of people that have put out records on Stax and, yes, very proud."

Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats is out now on Stax



Photo by Malia James

"All the tracks are live takes – good takes without moving and editing the hell out of them"

The Radiation Flowers

JOE BANKS investigates the gothic psychedelia of Canadian quintet **THE RADIATION FLOWERS**

"We make more music because we live in the middle of nowhere," says Shelby Gaudet, singer and guitarist with The Radiation Flowers, moody psych-gazers based out of Saskatoon, central Saskatchewan. "There's nothing much to do here in the winters and they're so long."

There's certainly a strong element of splendid isolation in their sound, which combines The Paisley Underground vibe of The Rain Parade, the chiming post-punk of Echo & The Bunnymen and the blissed-out grooves of The Black Angels. But it's the quality of their songwriting that sees them rise above

their influences. Pieces such as 'Feel It' and 'Run' from their eponymous debut album are very big tunes indeed, darkly melodic earworms that demand repeat plays. Gaudet's

languorous vocals float above a finely constructed wall of slow-burning guitar and subtle keys, while simple but effective hooks snag your attention.

Christopher Laramée (guitar), Elsa Gebremichael (keys), Jay Allen (bass) and Amber Ross (drums) complete the line-up. The band was originally all female, but the idea that this has any significance in the 21st century gets short shrift from Gaudet. Nevertheless, there's a quality to The Radiation Flowers' music that suggests a different take on what's traditionally been a male-dominated genre.

Up until the end of last year, the band went by a different name – Powder Blue – but were forced to change it upon receiving a cease and desist order from another Canadian band trading under that name. I wonder if their new name has anything to do with the mutant flora now growing around Chernobyl, but Gaudet says, "Chris came up with it. It sounded like a forgotten '60s band and we all liked it."

Those Saskatoon winters might drag, but on the strength of their debut, it won't be long until The Radiation Flowers come in from the cold.

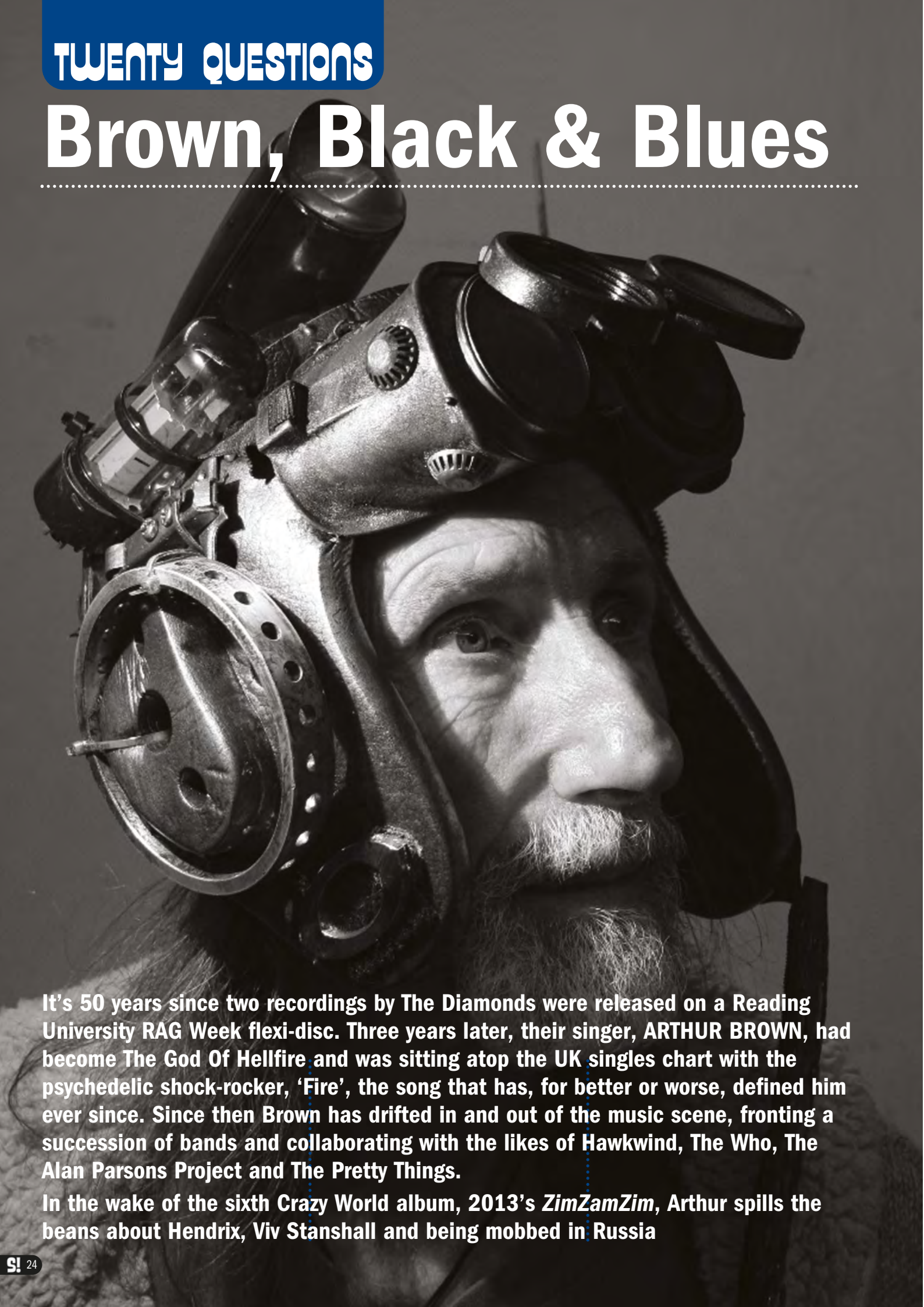
The Radiation Flowers is out now on Sundowning Sound Recordings



"There's nothing much to do here in the winter and they're so long"

TWENTY QUESTIONS

Brown, Black & Blues



It's 50 years since two recordings by The Diamonds were released on a Reading University RAG Week flexi-disc. Three years later, their singer, **ARTHUR BROWN**, had become The God Of Hellfire and was sitting atop the UK singles chart with the psychedelic shock-rocker, 'Fire', the song that has, for better or worse, defined him ever since. Since then Brown has drifted in and out of the music scene, fronting a succession of bands and collaborating with the likes of Hawkwind, The Who, The Alan Parsons Project and The Pretty Things.

In the wake of the sixth Crazy World album, 2013's *ZimZamZim*, Arthur spills the beans about Hendrix, Viv Stanshall and being mobbed in Russia

Shindig!: Do you remember when you were first seduced by music and what it was that you heard that made you want to pursue it yourself?

Arthur Brown: Some say that language and philosophy develop from people's relation to their environment. Whitby [in the English country of North Yorkshire] had a fishing fleet. The sailors echoed the rhythms that came in the wild rising and falling of wind and sea, in their shanties. Those sounds together with the cry of birds and other country sounds still echo through my bones. I also had a year in London when my father was a special constable and the explosions and tense silences fed into my DNA and later my music. My family was traumatised by their losses in the war and I'd sing away my pain. Music is a language that can celebrate life and point to a place of absolute liberation.

SD: What were the origins of the stage image and that "flaming head-dress"?

AB: In Montmartre in 1965 I was playing at a club which became the epicentre of the Paris music scene for that year. We were playing R&B, soul and early funk. But I began to wear costumes, to dance wildly, and to incorporate theatrical ideas. The audience was composed of beatniks, jazz greats like Roland Kirk, Salvador Dali, mafia dons, police chiefs, fashion models and budding Buddhists. One night I found in my rather sleazy hotel a crown with candles in it, left by someone from a wild party down the corridor. I wore it at the gig that night and people loved it.

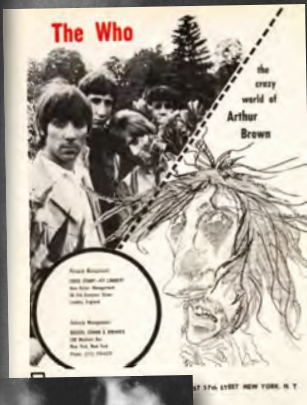
By the time I returned to the UK via some money earned by doing the soundtrack of a Roger Vadim movie, the UFO club was about to begin. Having formed The Crazy World, I decided to embrace a more pagan image and reactivate the flaming head, but the crown had disintegrated. We tried a vegetable colander with candles on it, but when I pulled it off some of my hair would go with it as the wax from the candles had solidified. So we tried a pie dish with a screw through it in the centre, going also into a strap which went under my chin. Of course it was difficult to sing with it on, because the strap choked my throat. But the petrol would burst into huge flame, often setting fire to my hair and clothes and the audience loved it. In came horns and wings over the ears to stop the helmet wobbling. In the end we had something that looked like a descendent of the Viking battle helmet. Again, we used petrol in the bowl of the helmet. This moved to lighter fluid, and cow gum mixed with other ingredients was applied to wick wound round the horns. This kept the flame going longer.

SD: You don't do that on stage any more. Is that down to venue health and safety stipulations or concern for your wellbeing?

AB: Well in the end the flames got to about three to four feet wide and four to five feet high. Dangerous. However, the accidents that have caused me most damage – broken bones and stitches – were not in fact caused by the fire helmet but other onstage pranks and mis-haps. In fact I am currently developing a new helmet with Mike and Paul Harrison, technicians and artists in residence with the current Crazy World. It will be a little more contained, with a somewhat smaller flame.



Arthur Brown sporting the Psychosonic Helmet in 2013 (opposite). He says, it allows him to play instruments with just his thoughts. This page, from top: Arthur and extra arms in '68; the '65 Diamonds flexi-disc; those classic '68 Crazy World releases; an early line-up of The Crazy World in '67. L-R: Vincent Crane, Brown, Drachen Theaker and Nick Greenwood (front)



The Hapshash-designed Crazy World poster; US booking agency ad for The Who and The Crazy World; Brown with The Jimi Hendrix Experience; 'Fire' on *Top Of The Pops*; the most talked about thing on TV that summer. Opposite: Arthur in *Kingdom Come*, early '70s; still hot stuff in the '80s

SD: How did The Crazy World come about?

AB: The name was devised by myself and a guy named Greg who played sax with me in Paris in the early soul/R&B days. I announced I would form a new outrageous band. I would call it The World Of Arthur Brown. Greg thought it wasn't crazy enough! So I said, OK, The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown and it stuck. However, the band's name became a real comment on society. Mainstream people saw us as being crazy. We saw the way they lived as being crazy. "The market rules" doesn't work, and materialism has run out of steam.

SD: How did you become signed to Track records, home to The Who and Jimi Hendrix?

AB: John Fenton, who'd worked with Brian Epstein, took us under his wing after seeing us at a London gig. He had us play at The Speakeasy and Joe Boyd was there spotting talent for the UFO club. All the major record companies came down to see the acts, and to wine and dine them. I went to dinner with at least 10 of the top people in the music recording industry over a period of three weeks. Pete Townsend went to see us and recommended us to Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp at Track, who had just missed out on The Bonzo Dog Band. Vincent Crane (keys), Drachen Theaker (drums) and I all discussed it, and felt that Track were at least in a frame of mind that might understand what we were aiming at. Pete recorded some demos of our numbers and before you could say "Take a drive in my flash fully automatic American car with electronically operated windows" (which Pete did) we signed a recording contract.

SD: What are your memories of Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp?

AB: Kit was outrageous, neurotic, quite caring, and brilliant. Chris was Mister Cool – a good looking guy who made a great impression on young ladies. Kit took care of older ladies, and young men. Kit was openly gay though he once did confess to me that he found gay sex too clinical, and hoped one day to get married. They ran their record label with flair

and rebellion, being intelligent enough negotiators to force Polydor into allowing them to do things which in terms of business at that time should not have been done. Kit and Chris worked together well by ducking and diving, boxing without obeying the rules. They were a great promotion team though, really fearless and imaginative in their tactics.

As managers they set about from the very beginning splitting up the band. They wanted me as a solo performer, not noticing that I worked better in a team that I know. They became erratic and unable to help us at several times of crisis and both ended up in need of management themselves. They had succumbed to drug habits that the unbelievable flow of

"One night I found in my rather sleazy hotel a crown with candles in it, left by someone from a wild party down the corridor. I wore it at the gig that night and people loved it"

cash coming in had made possible for them. I saw Kit once near to the time of his death and he looked a haunted man, rather paranoid. He was a man who inspired love in people. I would say that my feelings for him now are still loving, though he travelled down many roads I could not understand. I found him a tragic figure. Chris I ended up losing my respect for.

SD: In the sleeve notes to the first Crazy World album (written by Charles Fox of *The New Statesman*) it said you may have been the first genuine artist to come out of the underground. Do you think the music you made was revolutionary?

AB: What did make the band revolutionary was its whole concept, and the performance itself. It was multimedia, with cutting-edge costumes, masks, make-up, voodoo and shamanic

dancing. The topics were not ones people were used to find in pop music of the time. We also did comic skits and little dramas about police planting hippies with drugs. I would improvise poetry in the middle of what was a psychedelic soul song. Vincent took that clue and soon we would be in a totally different musical genre. This of course was not what came out on the *Crazy World* album, but it was somewhat represented on the *Strangelands* album.

SD: The Crazy World act got you into a lot of trouble, getting kicked off a Hendrix tour. Crazy days and great fun to be sure, but do you ever look back at that and think, "Wow, what a missed opportunity"?

AB: Actually, the reference to being "thrown off the tour" was a little misleading. It is true that at that time I was referred to in the music press as The Wild Man Of English Rock, but what happened was that Chris Stamp told Jimi Hendrix that they were proposing a tour and that we should open for him. They had worked out how to use that to promote both of us. He showed Jimi the photos of me in my mask and flaming helmet, and Jimi said, "I am not going to follow that." Subsequently he began to set his guitar on fire, and we did many a gig with him. On this occasion, though, my part in the tour was nixed.

SD: Why did it take 20 years for *Strangelands* (recorded in '69) to see light of day?

AB: It was a totally improvised album. A fine example of people's creativity being drawn out of them. They had to listen to each other and to the lyrics and respond. They were from very different backgrounds for example, it was the first time the synth/keyboard player had ever played in a rock band. My only instructions were to say before we began, "We will move out of the city into the country." Giorgio Gomelsky, when he heard it, booked us a tour in France organised by The Communist Party. He offered to put it out on Marmalade Records. I felt it was good, but wasn't quite the full expression of what I wanted to do at the time. Now it seems foolish to have withheld it.



SD: Your post-Crazy World outfit, Kingdom Come, was one of the most interesting, experimental rock bands of the early '70s. What do you regard as their crowning achievement?

AB: The greatest achievement was to be able to remain together through total changes in style, and produce two what are now considered classic albums in totally different fields. On the *Galactic Zoo* tour, the band all wore different costumes, and the lights moved rhythmically to create light worlds and shadow worlds. It was a climactic act quite demanding musically. Alice Cooper called it a "psychodrama". By the time we had performed it for a year, it was quite amazing. However for the *Journey* tour, the whole show had changed. We were projecting mandala, classical master paintings, we were the first band to use a gauze screen that allowed us, if we wanted to appear in the middle of a projected forest.

We also were the first band to do away with the drummer and base the band sound round the percussive properties of a drum machine. This was in '73. If you listen to 'Spirit Of Joy', the single from *Journey*, you'll be surprised how modern it sounds. I sang in a giant transparent syringe that filled with white powder as I performed. It took the mainstream of rock about seven years to catch on to this sound. Then Gary Numan came along. He took it his own way – I thought he was fantastic.

SD: Crazy World and Kingdom Come were a fertile breeding ground for some notable musicians, notably Carl Palmer and the late Vincent Crane. Looking back do you see yourself as a mentor/band leader in the mould of a Beefheart, Clinton or Zappa?

AB: I was interested in being a catalyst, both in performance and in recording. Rather than being a leader in the normal sense I tried to be with the other musicians in such a way as their creativity was drawn out of them, rather than that they were just a framework for my creativity. Vincent Crane was a monster keyboard musician, Carl Palmer a drum giant of his time. Drachen Theaker, the original drummer with The Crazy World, became

occasional percussionist with The Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the tabla player of choice for visiting Indian musicians. At that time, of course, we did not have a guitarist but in Kingdom Come we had Andy Dalby, a brilliant musician, while Victor Peraino was unequalled in his ability to create sonic landscapes with the synthesiser.

SD: You've collaborated with some interesting characters – Robert Calvert (Captain Lockheed) and Viv Stanshall (Captain Lockheed and Kingdom Come), troubled geniuses both. How challenging and rewarding was it to work with them?

AB: I had encounters regularly with both of them. In the case of Viv, the Bonzos and The Crazy World did quite a few gigs together, and Viv and I enjoyed sharing perspectives on life in general. We started to work together on two items: *The Brain Opera* and another piece about a giant iridescent green slug that landed on earth after a journey across universes. Our imaginations were hard to rein in. In fact we nudged each other further out. He was as powerful in his individuality as Frank Zappa.

They both had the same intensity but Viv had a capacity for riling people up, as did Bob Calvert. They could both nail a person's weakness the moment they met them, and would take occasionally a fiendish delight in prodding them where it hurt. Bob was charming and effervescent when he wasn't being overbearing. Working with Bob was for me a pleasure and I still see Captain Lockheed being way ahead of the field at the time it was made. Viv made me laugh and surprised me. He would look at me quizzically waiting to see if I had got the dumbfounding thing he had just said to me. His partner told me he considered we were both alike in our deepest natures. Bob also made me laugh as he poked fun at yet another sacred cow, or rubbed on my corns.

SD: What prompted your move to America at the turn of the '80s and what are your most vivid memory of this time?

AB: The style of music over here had changed.

Also in the late '70s I fell in love with a beautiful lady from Texas. We decided to have a child, and then got married. Musically, money was at a low ebb in the UK so I thought the US would hold brighter prospects. I could have had a good crack at a recording career in LA or New York but decided on Austin, Texas as a better place to bring up a family. Pretty soon, I was a trainee carpenter. I also decided to do a blues/R&B album in the old style. I got Jimmy Carl Black involved and he brought in some of the other ex-Mothers and a whole load of great blues players from the area. The album, featuring many old classics, was called *Brown, Black And Blue* and received many positive reviews.

During this time I was invited to be on a panel judging the bands at a concert called The White Nights festival in St Petersburg, Russia. When I got there I was recognised so often that it was decided I should sing instead, which I ended up doing to 20,000 people and it was beamed live into nine million homes on the only TV channel. This was the time of glasnost and I was treated as a kind of cultural hero.

SD: How did you become involved in the *SF Sorrow* shows following your return to the UK?

AB: It was something that Mark St John, The Pretty Things' manager particularly wanted me to do. It demanded a different approach and made me focus very carefully on all the flow of words and the intention of the writer. In much the same way as an actor will approach a role. The fact that it was the first live internet broadcast of that nature was also challenging. We did many shows together – both where I supported them and where I sang with them. Dave Gilmour, a fan of the Pretties, played lead guitar on the *SF* shows. He was really easy to work with and Phil May was happy that the music would at last get seen in the context of the story he originally had in mind when he wrote the lyrics for the tunes.

SD: You also joined Hawkwind for a stint in the early noughties. How did that come about and how did it work out?

AB: When The Crazy World played with Hawkwind at Drachfest, it determined Dave and Kris Brock to return Hawkwind to being a band with a theatrical show and they suggested I join them for a while. We included some Kingdom Come material in the set and Dave Brock was good at keeping me musically comfortable and challenged. Of course we did a lot of Hawkwind's original material from when Bob Calvert was with them. I thought it worked quite well although I had to sing on the side of the stage, as the bass was so loud.

SD: You reunited surviving members of Kingdom Come for a one off show in London in 2005 which won you the Showman Of The Year award from *Classic Rock*. Assuming you have a mantelpiece, do you keep this one on display?

AB: It is still awaiting the unpacking of a couple of boxes of stuff in my yurt. I'm happy to have it, as it came as a surprise to me to have actually won an award. It was one of the last big shows at The Astoria. The gig itself was chaos, in fact it was all so very nearly cancelled when the original agent walked out but thankfully others took over the reins. In the end it was a successfully orchestrated evening. The cast was hugely eclectic, all introduced by Howard Marks and I sang with three different line-ups including of course the "classic" Kingdom Come. We brought in some of the old props and incorporated eight "policemen" wielding truncheons for 'Night Of The Pigs'.

In fact we are just about to release the DVD

I was invited to be on a panel judging the bands at a concert called The White Nights festival in Russia. When I got there I was recognised so often that it was decided I should sing instead, which I ended up doing to 20,000 people"

of the show.

SD: You played at Glastonbury Fayre in '71 and your performance is captured at length in Nick Roeg's film of the same name. Was there any sense at the time that you were involved in what is now regarded as such an iconic event? You were back there again in 2010. How strange was it to return to the scene of past glories and was it a better or worse experience this time around?

AB: The Glastonbury festival of 1971 was a free festival inspired by stoned-out visions of a new society based on spiritual principles, and built in accordance with ancient sacred sciences. As such, it perhaps reflected a movement that became more widespread, before being smothered by Thatcherism and materialistic greed.

There was a sense of trust and openness. This is why my *avant-garde* band Kingdom Come was well received. The Glastonbury festivals of the later period came after the commercial success of many of the original underground bands, and the music produced in the wake of Thatcher. They were no longer spiritual events. They drew enormous crowds but they were, as

commercial festivals go, among the best. While it is good to play to a large crowd to me they are now too huge although there is still a small core of people who operate the Green Fields area, and it is here that children and adults alike can get a taste of the original ethos.

SD: Do you feel that you have received proper recognition for your undoubted influence on the likes of Alice Cooper, Kiss and Marilyn Manson?

AB: Well you could add to that list King Diamond and others who have admitted influence, such as Peter Gabriel, George Clinton, Bruce Dickinson, Ian Gillan, Pete Shelley (Buzzcocks). But beyond the statement by artists is the network that governs awards, press etc. usually manipulated and informed by management and record companies. That said, I have had rather a lot of recognition, and consider myself to have had a successful career based not on financial wealth, but a life that was meaningful to me.

SD: *Shindig!* saw you play live a couple of years back and was astounded by your seemingly boundless energy and on-stage moves. To what

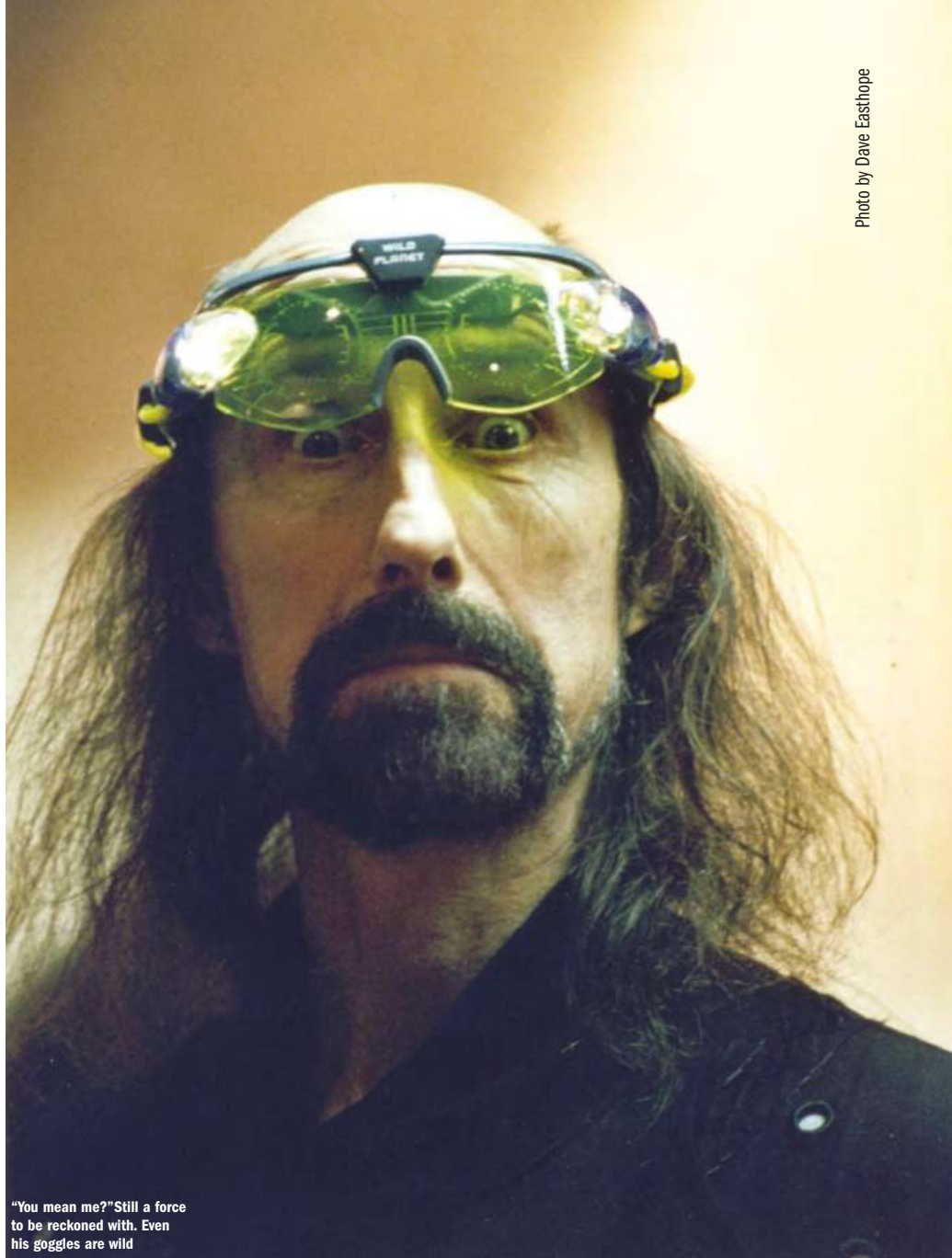
do you owe your age-defying vigour and vitality?

AB: I keep my body supple, my mind open and flexible, and listen to my heart. I spend time with people of all ages and backgrounds and I eat what my body knows is good for it. I don't listen to most health professionals although I will in times of crisis consult someone I feel can help me.

SD: What's currently cooking and what's next for Arthur Brown?

AB: We have, with the current line-up, over a period of four years built up from playing small gigs to playing the main stage at festivals. This year, for instance we play the main stage on Saturday night at Bestival. We are all eagerly looking forward to pushing our musical and performance boundaries so that we will constantly travel with our audiences into new territory and serve you tasty treats. [\[A\]](http://www.arthur-brown.com)

ZimZamZim is available now from www.arthur-brown.com



"You mean me?" Still a force to be reckoned with. Even his goggles are wild

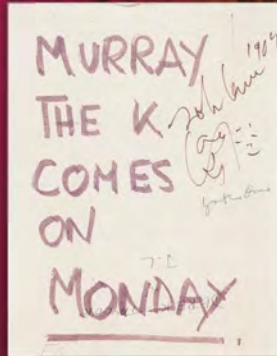
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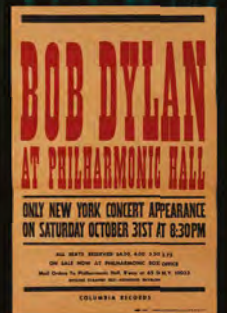
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Bob Keane's Del-Fi Records Ampex Reel to Reel Portable Studio Used to Record Ritchie Valens' "Donna" as well as Songs by Chan Romero, Sam Cooke, Dick Dale, the Addrisi Brothers and Others (US, 1957-1962).
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Bob Dylan at Philharmonic Hall Concert Poster (Columbia Records, 1964).
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Elvis Signed 8" x 10" 1955 Photo (Louisiana Hayride, 1955). From the Everything Elvis Collection
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AUCTIONS

Optical Sounds

By rights, **THE OPTIC NERVE** should have achieved the same kind of accolades and sales as **The Long Ryders**, **Rain Parade** or even **REM**. As it is, their recorded legacy remains small but perfectly formed.

Born of a revival they had little connection with, the New York quartet made thrillingly authentic, chiming mid-60s influenced folk-rock in the '80s, crowning them as the kings of their own castle but leaving them very few places to go.

GLYNIS WARD hears what happened from the single-minded Bobby Belfiore

New York in the '80s was the epicentre of the garage scene in the US. There was a good number of bands, and each filled a special niche. There were, of course, The Fuzztones, with their own brand of high energy rock infused garage fuzz, then there was the living '60s jukebox of The Headless Horsemen, the wild psychedelia of The Mad Violets and Blacklight Chameleons, The Vipers who mixed the English and American sounds, the more '60s pop Cheepskates, The Fleshtones who were mastering the blend of frat and indie-rock, Mersey beat was represented by The Mosquitos, pure '60s teen-punk in The Outta Place, and the mod Secret Service.

And then there were The Optic Nerve. Bobby Belfiore formed the band with Orin (from The Outta Place) and Elan Portnoy (The Headless Horsemen, The Fuzztones) and Ira Elliot (The Fuzztones) in 1985 to play the one style of '60s garage revival that the New York scene had overlooked – folk-rock. Bobby had just moved to New York from DC, where he had played with The Purple Onion. Eventually guitarist and singer Tony Matura joined what became an ever revolving line-up, as Ira and Elan were busy with The Fuzztones. “The problem with keeping a steady line up was that full-time drummers and bass players in New York were scarce as hens’ teeth” Bobby explains. “Most of them tended to play in several bands at the same time, and if you wanted to hire one you’d usually have to pay their expenses... and a simple thing like locking in a gig or practice session could involve a dozen phone calls. No guarantee anyone would remember anything from one rehearsal to the next as a result, shows were often hit and miss... unfortunately something of a trademark for us.”

During their brief existence, The Optic Nerve mainly played shows in the New York area, Michael Stark, editor of *Trashbeat*, an '80s New York fanzine that chronicled the local scene recalls that people loved The Optic Nerve, partly because they had pedigree. But beyond having a mix of respected area scene musicians, they had songs. It was always the songwriting that set The Optic Nerve apart. A casual air pervades each lyric, a loosely woven poetry which always seems somewhat biographically observant, sometimes even poignant. The songs range from the Dylanesque style of half-spoken phrasing to Byrdsian California harmony laden folk-rockers, and where as many of the '80s groups so heavily influenced by the '60s could seem “affected” at times, The Optic Nerve always struck with a genuine honesty, lacking the cocky attitude and the overdone clothes that went with the garage bands of the '80s.

After two EPs full of promise on Dave Amels and Mike Linn’s Cryptovision label, the band “officially” called it quits in '88. The difficulties of keeping a line-up together – and what felt like a lack of interest outside of the New York scene, and Bobby’s growing disillusionment with New York in general – had put a dampener on their spirits. It seemed like a struggle without reward, but for Bobby there seemed to be an intrinsic need to keep

The Optic Nerve always struck with a genuine honesty, lacking the cocky attitude and the overdone clothes that went with the garage bands of the '80s.

something of The Optic Nerve alive. In '93, Screaming Apple released the “unreleased album” *Forever And A Day*, and later, Get Hip re-released their two EPs on an album with seven more unreleased cuts. Encouraged by the interest, Bobby and Tony continued to write, and in 2004 approached Cryptovision’s Dave Amels with a handful of new songs, which Dave says were strong, strong enough for another album.

That album was recorded in 2005 with Dave and Dennis Diken producing, and Mike Caiati engineering the basic tracks at Brooklyn’s Coyote Studios with Bobby, Tony and Tom Ward, who played bass for most of the band’s existence. Mike Linn and Dennis Diken played drums while Dave played organ and a small orchestra was added to a few songs. Dave then took Bobby and Tony to The Bomb Factory in LA, where they could spend time putting the finishing touches on it. Everything was finished up in early 2006, but Cryptovision had a few irons in the fire with Dennis Diken’s first solo release, and then Dave had some family concerns to deal with.

Finally, by 2009, when releasing the album became an option, record sales were waning so much that any return in financial investment seemed stark. So it sat. And the rumours of the great “lost” album circulated. For those eager to hear this new album, time kept passing, and it seemed like it was never going to see the light of day... until a press release from State Records emerged informing two tracks slated for the ill-fated album were to be released on a single. Mole from the label had been in contact with a mutual friend of his and Bobby’s – Matteo Bocci – who convinced Dave to let Mole have his pick of the tracks to release.



'Penelope Sunshine' is the undisputed A-side, and a crowning jewel for The Optic Nerve – the epitome of California sunshine-pop mixed with folk-rock. "What's funny is that I *wrote* it in LA when I was house sitting a bungalow in Hollywood over the 4th of July in the late '90s and knocked out the song in about 20 minutes. It was about a girl from the East Village, a 'scene maker'," Bobby explains. It is perhaps the best 20 minutes that Bobby Belfiore ever spent. "I don't consider myself much of a songwriter though," he laughs. "I only seem to be able to write Optic Nerve stuff, a simple kind of folk-rock because I guess that's what comes most naturally to me (and Tony, too)."

When asked how he feels about the State single release, Bobby says, "I feel kind of like a kid at Christmas. I probably should have fought harder and been more proactive in pushing to get [the album] out, but by that point I'd become fed up with the whole subject." The great "lost Optic Nerve album" as a whole still remains tantalisingly hidden away, for now at least – 13 more gems waiting to be heard.

Someday. 

'Penelope Tuesday' / 'Here To Stay' is out now on State



The Optic Nerve during sessions for the "lost" 2005 album. Coyote Studios, Brooklyn NY, January 2005; in their '80s prime (opposite)

Too Much Is Not Enough

.....
From cult status to Grammys and addiction, GRAVEYARD are back... with a new lease of life.

On the eve of their fourth album, guitarist/vocalist Joakim Nilsson tells GREG HEALEY how the Swedish quartet is so much more than a “retro rock band”

Risen! Graveyard in 2015. L-R: Truls Mörck (bass), Axel Sjöberg (drums), Jonatan LaRocca-Ramm (guitar), Joakim Nilsson (guitar, vocals)

What began as a group of teenagers exploring the rock music of the late '60s and early '70s has grown to become one of the most authentic and exciting bands around today. Channeling the sounds and the spirit of groups like Cream, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin, to name but a handful of their influences, they have managed to capture the creative dynamism of one of music's most revolutionary eras whilst making it new and relevant to today's audiences.

The story began back in 1995, in Gothenburg Sweden, when Joakim Nilsson along with friends Rikard Edlund, Magnus Pelander and Kristoffer Sjö Dahl formed a rock band, originally called Winterorb. The name was quickly changed to Norrskén and, immersed in music, they set out to explore what they called “straightforward rock”. In a template that still holds true today they quickly drew in many influences, often with the help of kindred spirits. “We’ve been doing the same thing for 25 years. Back then we’d started to get into original rock, like Sabbath. We had a lot of record collectors and dealers sending us mix tapes of really cool bands like Bang and we had an openness to all music, but particularly music from the late '60s and '70s. I suppose eventually it became a mix between everything we’d ever heard,” is how explains Nilsson this long and fruitful journey.

In the year 2000, after releasing two demos and



a 7" single, Norrskén broke up, with Pelander going on to form Witchcraft and Nilsson and Edlund joining the dirty blues outfit Albatross. Described by Nilsson as "a jamming band" this outfit was more about musicians having fun than any desire to perform. "It wasn't about having a real career. The kind of band we were we wouldn't have that big a crowd playing the kind of thing we were doing," says Nilsson. After six years of this enjoyable, but rather self-indulgent music making, Nilsson and Edlund, along with their drummer, Sjöberg, and the guitarist, Truls Mörck, decided time was running out for them to do what they really wanted to do. "We felt this was the last chance we had to pursue a music career and we couldn't really do that with Albatross. I'd always considered myself a vocalist rather than a guitarist and the guy who I formed Graveyard with, Rick Edlund, he was a bass player. It was about getting to do the things we wanted to do and making the music we wanted to make," recalls Nilsson. "Graveyard came out of the love for '70s music that had always been there from the beginning. We said to ourselves that we were going to be a straightforward rock band again."

The band's story took on parallel with Lilly Allen's when, after playing only a handful of shows and recording a two-track demo and uploading it to Myspace, they were quickly offered record deals by Transsubstans for Sweden and TeePee Records for the USA. Beginning what would be a three album collaboration with the producer Don Ahlsterberg, a man who Nilsson describes as being like a fifth member of the band, they hit the studio to record their self-titled debut album. "Don brought a lot of professionalism into the band. We had never done a record in a studio and we'd never had a sound like he could make. He had a lot of good ideas as a song writer too and taught us a lot," says Nilsson.

Released in 2008 this well received album sold only in modest numbers but cemented the band's reputation enough to secure an invite to play that year's SXSW. Their first time in the States, the experience was to prove more than a little terrifying. "I was shaking. I'd never been exposed to something like that. The size of the festival, SXSW, it's a huge thing with people everywhere. And we couldn't even bring our instruments because we didn't have visas," recalls Nilsson.

The band continued the hard work of building a career and in January of 2011 their reward came when they signed with Nuclear Blast Records. Their second album, *Hisingen Blues*, had been slowly taking shape over the previous two years, amidst the conflicting responsibilities of song writing, touring and working at their day jobs. As Nilsson explains, the process was difficult. "We had to tour a lot to make money to record the album, so it was

done in three parts. Don didn't take much money for the first album but on the second he needed to get paid."

In what was to be their largest gig to date, as well as a triumphant homecoming, Graveyard's rise continued when they supported Iron Maiden at Ullevi Stadium, Gothenberg in July of 2011. Speaking to *Shindig!* Nilsson explains how the years of small gigs prepared him for the very different experience of being a front man of a stadium rock band: "It's easier being a front guy at a small gig than an arena, but doing those small gigs teaches you to just play and be yourself. Not do anything special. I've never been that guy jumping around. I try but I will never get used to that. But we are doing alright and getting better at that."


With a committed label behind it their second album sold well and, in what was a surprise for

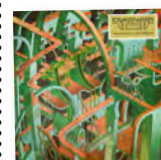
to write new songs. We worked on the fourth album for over a year, even though the recording process was really fast," says Nilsson of this time.

In a band whose ethos is a collective one, particularly when it comes to song writing, such tensions can prove to be counter productive. "We all contribute to the song writing process. Someone comes up with an idea and jam it, trying different ideas. Edlund's problems had an impact of course." After time away from the group Edlund's absence would become permanent in early 2015.

Their fourth and latest album *Innocence And Decadence* will finally be released in late September. Recorded with their old friend and founding member of Graveyard, Truls Mörck, on bass, it marks a new phase in the group's development. Mörck originally left the group around the time of the first album, replaced by Jonathan Ramm on guitar. With the group's problems behind them and with a new producer, the jazz musician Johan Lindström, on board they have pursued a more nuanced and confident approach. Nilsson explains: "It was time for us to see what we could do with songwriting ourselves. Everything is new, with a new bass player and producer and recorded in a different studio. We wanted to experiment a little bit with things. Johan isn't just a producer, he's an amazing musician and his understanding for music is unreal. There's a better feeling in the band right now. We've got a new found energy."

Graveyard's strength is that their music is not made as an homage, nor is it guilty of pastiche. Bridling against the term "retro rock", that has been applied by some in the music press, the group's singer Joakim Nilsson explains that such terms "make their music small, like a throw back band." He continues, "we want to be more than that and make new music that people from today can listen to. Not just those who are into the music of the '70s, but all people."

Drawing on influences that range from early blues through to '70s rock and beyond, they combine these sources with an outlook that is resolutely 21st Century. Although in no way preachy, much of their music, which is rooted in the band's upbringing in the Scandinavian ethos of social responsibility, offers observations on contemporary issues. Rock music has always been an agent for change and, through the authentic analogue and valve powered sound of Graveyard, with its roots in the expressive power of dirty blues, it may yet again. 



Innocence & Decadence is released by Nuclear Blast on September 25th. Graveyard will then be on tour throughout October and November.

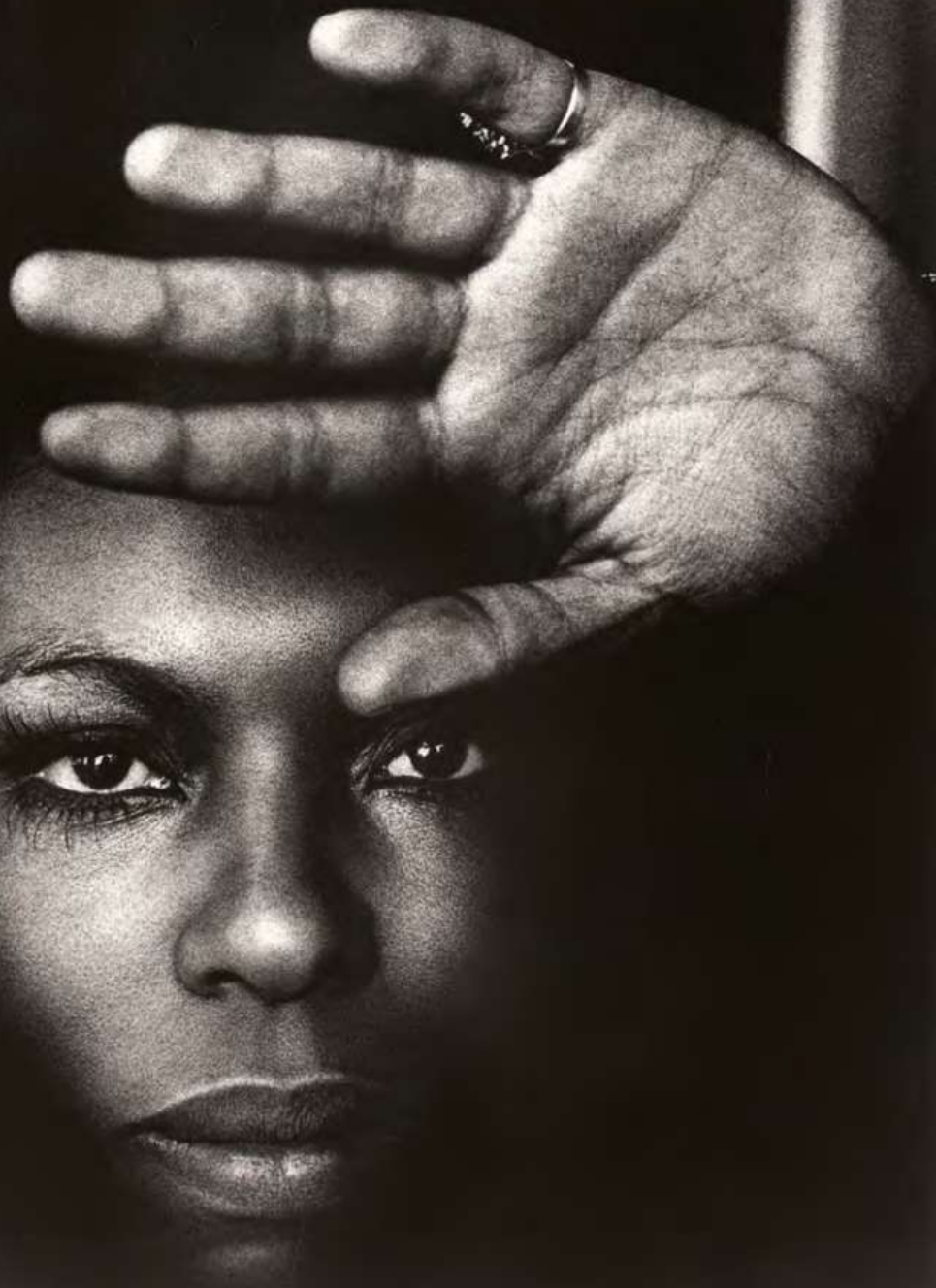


"There's a better feeling in the band right now. We've got a new found energy"

the band, was awarded a Swedish Grammy in 2012. "Someone told us we weren't going to win, so we were just drinking. When they announced it we were already really drunk. A lot weird things happened that night," says Nilsson.

After a period of relentless touring Graveyard took time off in 2012 to write and record their third album, *Lights Out* and deal with bass player Rick Edlund's emerging problems with addiction. "There were a lot of tensions in the band around some people. It wasn't that fun at that time. We call that album our hate album."

These difficulties would play a significant part in the story of the band over the next couple of years as they promoted *Lights Out* until, in early 2014, the decision was made to take a break. "We deliberately took a step back. We were just thinking about things and working a lot with Rick, trying to help him get better. Also, not touring as much was deliberate, so we weren't wearing ourselves out and we could take time



The first time ever we saw her face.
Roberta Flack photographed in 1971

Take It To Heart

The story behind ROBERTA FLACK's remarkable debut, catapulted to the top of the charts by a fluke movie appearance. ANDY MORTEN gets starstruck

When Roberta Flack's 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' hit the US #1 spot in April 1972, few of the millions who bought it could've cared less that it, and its parent album, *First Take*, which simultaneously topped the album charts, were in fact three years old. Flack had released her third album, *Quiet Fire*, in November '71 and it had barely dented the Top 20. The same month, Clint Eastwood's directorial debut, *Play Misty For Me*, opened and featured 'The First Time...' in a prominent love scene.

"The pivotal issue that made that first album

come to national attention," Roberta tells *Shindig!*, "was Clint Eastwood insisting that 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' be kept at the slow pace that I'd performed it at. Atlantic [Records] wanted the song sped up a bit to be more 'radio friendly'." Indeed, it takes Flack almost five minutes to negotiate the three verses of Ewan MacColl's '57 love letter to his future wife Peggy Seeger, so languid and sensual is her approach. "That movie and its success got my song the attention and me right along with it. It hit the charts as a result and off I went." 'The First Time' won the Record Of The Year Grammy for '72, kick-starting a hugely

successful career, which shows little sign of slowing down 40-odd years later.

Raised in Arlington, Virginia, Flack was turned on to music by her parents at any early age. She excelled at piano, being awarded a scholarship by Howard University in Washington, DC before switching her major from piano to voice after having fallen under the spell of gospel singers Mahalia Jackson and Sam Cooke in the Baptist church. The sudden death of her father when she was 19 necessitated a move into teaching music, which she did in Junior High schools and from her home in Washington. But

ROBERTA FLACK / FIRST TAKE



“I sang songs about the times. I sang show tunes, songs by Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen. Anything that spoke to my heart”

the performance bug stayed with her and she began accompanying opera singers at The Tivoli Club in the evenings, eventually playing sets of blues, folk and pop standards alone during the intervals. “I sang songs about the times,” she explains, “what was going on. I sang show tunes, songs by Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen. Ones that told stories that moved me; anything that spoke to my heart.”

Word soon spread and Flack took her first professional gig at Mr Henry’s, a Capitol Hill restaurant, in ’68, where she was “discovered” by jazz pianist and vocalist, Les McCann. “Her voice touched, tapped, trapped, and kicked every emotion I’ve ever known,” McCann later wrote in the sleeve notes for *First Take*. “I laughed, cried, and screamed for more... she alone had the voice.”

Roberta is keen to clarify. “[Les] didn’t discover me so much as open a door that resulted in my first major record deal with Atlantic. Many talent agents and producers saw me before he did. People make lots of promises, but he followed through.”

McCann took Flack to Atlantic Records producer Joel Dorn, for whom she reportedly played 42 songs in three hours before he snapped her up. In November ’68, 39 songs were demoed, leaving the team with something of a dilemma about what to present to the world on her first album. So who chose the eventual contents of *First Take*? “I did!” states Roberta triumphantly. She plumped for a wildly eclectic selection; songs of many styles and from disparate sources, all connected by their emotional heft and spiritual heart. The whole thing was cut in 10 hours over two days in late February ’69. “I had performed many of those

songs over and over at Mr Henry’s,” she recalls. “They came pouring out of me and my heart. What you hear is as close to a live performance as I would have done at that time.”

Gene McDaniels’ radically-charged ‘Compared To What’ proves an uncharacteristically funky opener, Flack’s version being the first to be recorded, before McCann’s rendition was captured live in Montreux that June for his *Swiss Movement* album. Andrés Blanco Guzman and Manuel Álvarez Maciste’s ‘Angelitos Negros’ had been released by Toña la Negra way back in 1942; the traditional spiritual, ‘I Told Jesus’, was probably learnt from Nina Simone’s ’62 live recording; Fran Landesman and Thomas Wolf’s ‘Ballad Of The Young Men’ originated from the ’59 stage musical, *The Nervous Set*; Flack’s good friend and future musical partner Donny Hathaway contributed two co-writes in ‘Our Ages Or Our Hearts’ and ‘Tryin’ Times’, a biting slice of social commentary.


But it’s the devastatingly fragile and emotional readings of the aforementioned ‘The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face’ and Leonard Cohen’s ‘Hey, That’s No Way To Say Goodbye’ that keep many listeners coming back to Roberta’s debut. Flack imbues both songs with a humanity and humility that might be inaccessible to many in their original incarnations. In her hands, these poetic odes to all-consuming love take on universal depth and intensity.

The “less is more” approach employed in the sparse, often feather-light instrumentation (Flack’s vocal and piano supported by John Pizzarelli’s guitar, Ron Carter’s bass and Ray Lucas’ drums) and spacious arrangements (courtesy of Atlantic’s William Fischer) helped ensure that *First Take* inhabited a radically

different place to contemporary outings by Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin, Odetta, Judy Collins or any of the other artists routinely named as being Flack’s peers.

First Take was released on June 20th, ’69, housed in a sleeve depicting Flack in a nightclub gazing intently at her piano, while her bass player and drummer look on from the smoky stage. It received mixed reviews – a belated October ’70 notice in *Rolling Stone* was favourable – and sales were modest, resulting in its follow-up, the similarly intoxicating *Chapter Two*, taking over a year to appear. But Flack’s talent could not be denied – her place in popular music was assured.

With the benefit of hindsight, most of us would find it hard to believe that ‘The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face’, and the album on which it appeared, wouldn’t have become massive hits eventually – with or without Clint Eastwood’s help. So was it strange to experience one’s first major chart success with three-year old recordings on the back of a mainstream movie? “It blew my mind,” she says. “I’m not sure that the song would have charted if it had had a different arrangement or was sped up. Sometimes the meaning of a song is lost in the arrangement and the production.”

And as long as Flack continued to base her choice of material on *meaning*, she’d be sure of creating the kind of timeless, inspiring artistry that years of over-exposure on movie soundtracks and TV ads, and a hundred pale cover versions, could do nothing to erode. 

Roberta Flack performs on the Legends Live tour with Dionne Warwick, Mary Wilson and The Drifters, nationwide from 2nd October.



50

Shindig! is 50.

Well, technically, it's 57 but we reset the counter to one when we re-launched and hit the High Street in late 2007.

To celebrate this monumental coming of age, we asked our trusted team of contributors to submit their favourite albums released during those (almost) eight years, whether new work or fresh compilations of old gear.

What emerged is the musical soundtrack to our lifetime so far, and as fine a haul as you're likely to find in one place

1

The Dragons
BFI

Ninja Tune, 2007



Out of the blue, this 1970 curio appears and blows everyone's minds with its 30 years ahead of its time electronic art-pop moves.

2

Various Artists
Thank You Friends: The Ardent Records Story

Big Beat, 2008

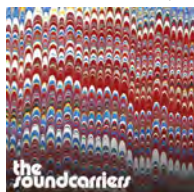


As well as telling the Big Star story, this is proof that Ardent was home to the best out of time beat and powerpop sounds of the '70s.

3

The Soundcarriers
Harmonium

Melodic, 2009



Evokes timeless summers spent cruising around with the top down. Light yet intricate jazz/pop excursions to drown the frown and gladden the heart.

4

Horisont
Tva Sidor Av Horisonten

Crusher, 2009



Monstrous Swedish heavy-rock that painstakingly recalls the mid-70s greats, while including hearty dollops of melody.

5

White Hills
Heads On Fire

Thrill Jockey, 2009



Hawkwind crash land in Detroit's Grande Ballroom in 1971. Warp factor 10, Mr Sulu!

6

George Jackson
In Memphis

Kent, 2009



A prolific songwriter with a hitherto unknown back catalogue of unreleased songs for Goldwax, Fame and Sounds Of Memphis.

7

Camera Obscura
My Maudlin Career

4AD, 2009



Every CO album has bettered the last, but it was this, their fourth, that made us realise we were dealing with a genius songwriter.

8

Various Artists
Brazilian Guitar Fuzz Bananas

Tropica In Furs, 2010



Super-freaky collection of rare and undiscovered fuzz-funk nuggets from tropical South America.

9

Stone Breath
The Shepherdess And The Bone White Bird

Dark Holler, 2010



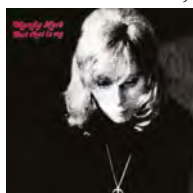
When Timothy Renner's pitch-black Stone Breath unexpectedly returned they were as bloody and uncompromising as ever.

10 **Airbus**
Test Flight
Tenth Planet, 2010



Who knew that a pile of DIY demos by a couple of jobbing songwriters and '60s pop journeymen could yield this kind of treasure?

11 **Mandy More**
But That Is Me
Sunbeam, 2010



Ultra-rare major label release doubled in size. Swirling rock, heartbreaking torch songs and the best cover ever of 'God Only Knows'.

12 **Various Artists**
Book A Trip Volumes 1 & 2
Now Sounds, 2010 / 2013



Kiss those bootlegs goodbye. Major label US sunshine pop and psych-lite obscurities never sounded or looked so good.

13 **Sandy Denny**
Sandy Denny
Universal, 2011



Nineteen CDs, 21 hours of music, 100 previously unreleased recordings, a 72-page hardback book, oodles of memorabilia: the last word in definitive collections.

14 **Vibravoid**
Minddrugs
Sulatron, 2011



Essential listening for anyone who either needs reminding of what they got up to at UFO in 1967 or has spent half their life wishing they'd been there.

15 **The Stepkids**
The Stepkids
Stones Throw, 2011



Wonderful kaleidoscopic soul with lush harmonies and psych-funk grooves to die for.

16 **Trembling Bells**
Abandoned Love
Honest Jon's, 2011



The second Bells outing, on which they find both their feet and their voice. Ignore the freak-folk tag; these are timeless epics.

17 **Various Artists**
Motown's Mowest Story
1971-1973
Light In The Attic, 2011



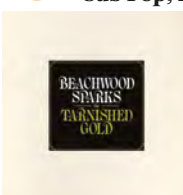
Fantastic document of Motown's short-lived West Coast offshoot featuring sun-kissed soul and funk from the likes of Sisters Love, Odyssey and Frankie Valli.

18 **Edgar 'Jones' Jones**
Soothing Music For Stray Cats
Viper, 2012



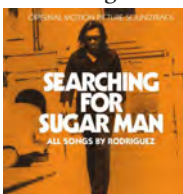
Scouse bass legend comes up with a set of authentic soul, jazz and vintage R&B to blow your mind.

19 **Beachwood Sparks**
The Tarnished Gold
Sub Pop, 2012



Reformed legends' triumphant return with a brilliant update of The Byrds' sun-kissed *Notorious*-era sound.

20 **Rodriguez**
Searching For Sugar Man
Light In The Attic, 2012



Rodriguez's comeback was nothing short of miraculous and the soundtrack proves he should never have disappeared into obscurity in the first place.

21 **White Fence**
Family Perfume Volumes 1&2
Woodsist, 2012



Tim Presley's marvellous lo-fi home recording project brings to bear the full spectrum of analogue overload and pure, muddy brilliance.

22 **Melody's Echo Chamber**
Melody's Echo Chamber
Weird World, 2012



If you've never fallen asleep in the bath to the spacey electronic dream-pop of 'Bisou Magique' then your life is as yet incomplete.

23 **Lee Hazlewood**
There's A Dream I've Been Saving: LHI 1966-71
Light In The Attic, 2012



Three Lee albums and two CDs of his amazing psych-pop, garage and country-rock productions, plus a DVD of *Cowboy In Sweden* and a huge book. Wow!

24 **Tame Impala**
Lonerism
Modular, 2012



Third album from Kevin Parker opened many readers of this tome to new music, and also showed how psychedelia can move with the times.

Don't accuse Beachwood Sparks of aping their heroes



**25 Soundtrack Of Our Lives
Throw It To The Universe**
Parlophone, 2012



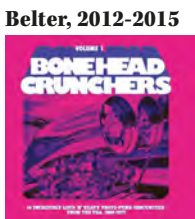
Ebbot and the boys bow out with a final album that homages heroes and influences, stays true to form and impresses with its integrity.

**26 Various Artists
Country Funk 1969-1975**
Light In The Attic, 2012



The start of a series that's had many foraging through country music bargain bins in search of soulful, swampy sounds; the *Nuggets* of its world.

**27 Various Artists
Bonehead Crushers, Bonehead Crunchers, Ultimate Bonehead!**
Belter, 2012-2015



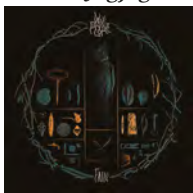
The ultimate soundtrack to a sleazy head-banging grease brawl or merely glam-friendly, sexist piffle for mullet-skulled thugs?

**28 The Steppes
Green Velvet Electric**
Cherry Red, 2013



Finally the best psychedelic rock band of the '80s get the exposure they deserve. Irish-American acid-rock of *la Belle Époque*.

**29 Wolf People
Fain**
Jagjaguwar, 2013



Charged like a thunderstorm on a summer's day, *Fain* is the Magna Carta of re-nationalised retro-rock.

**30 The Hidden Masters
Of This And Other Worlds**
Rise Above, 2013



This blend of psych, jazz, pop and rock had us mesmerised. One single, one incredible album, and that's all we got. Thanks for the memories.

**31 Serge Gainsbourg
Intoxicated Man 1958-62**
él, 2013



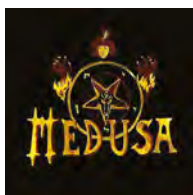
His remarkably inventive first four albums, originally released under the radar, now hugely influential and always entertaining.

**32 Various Artists
Love, Poetry & Revolution**
Grapefruit, 2013



It's rare that comps of British psych, freakbeat and flower-pop offer anything new these days. This one is stuffed with exceptions.

**33 Medusa
First Step Beyond**
Numero Group, 2013



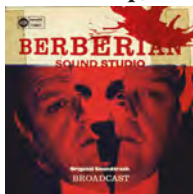
Unreleased four-track recording from 1975 yielded Sabbath-like doom-rock and lengthy Amon Düül II-esque jams. See also *Darkscorch Canticles* comp.

**34 Nilsson
The RCA Albums Collection**
Sony, 2013



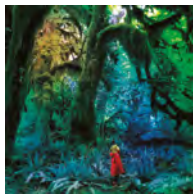
From the genius of the first few albums to the post-*Nilsson Schmilsson* madness, a not entirely serious body of work from a one of a kind.

**35 Broadcast
Berberian Sound Studio OST**
Warp, 2013



Continuing the incidental feel of *Witch Cults Of The Radio Age*, yet with a softer musical hue, *Berberian Sound Studio* thrilled fans with its multi-faceted scope.

**36 Jacco Gardner
Cabinet Of Curiosities**
Trouble In Mind, 2013



The Dutch psych-pop Prince's debut proved that good music doesn't need to re-invent the past; it could re-interpret. Baroque-pop perfection.

**37 Jonathan Wilson
Fanfare**
Bella Union, 2013



Epics are a rare thing these days but studio boffin, singer, songwriter and guitarist Wilson achieved just that with this sprawling West Coast outing.

Harry Nilsson, one of a kind

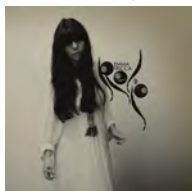


38 Small Faces
Here Come The Nice
Immediate / Charly, 2014



Lovingly compiled and remastered collection of some of the finest pop music ever to come out of the UK.

39 Emma Tricca
Relic
Bird, 2014



Glacial, detached yet stirring observations on the vicissitudes of contemporary urban life from London's *giallo* queen.

40 Wilko Johnson & Roger Daltrey
Going Back Home
Chess, 2014



Wilko bonds with Who frontman Daltrey over a love of Johnny Kidd & The Pirates and bashes out this belter of a disc, then doesn't die!

41 The Action & The Creation
The Singles Box Sets
Demon, 2014



The very bedrocks upon which so many of us built our record collections and love of '60s flower-pop, back on seven-inch where it belongs.

42 Graham Day & The Forefathers
Good Things
Own Up, 2014



Thirty years has done little to dim the power and integrity of these bastions of British rock 'n' roll as they power through their killer back catalogue.

43 Rog & Pip
Our Revolution
Rise Above, 2014



Late '60s to pre-punk '70s glam and hard-rock crunchers from former Sorrows, Pip Witcher and Roger Lomas. A *bona fide* classic is born.

44 Temples
Sun Structures
Heavenly, 2014

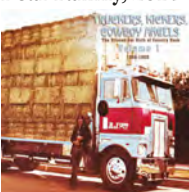


Tame Impala ushered in psych for indie kids and Temples ran with it. An assured debut that trumps the competition with both melodies and panache.

Temples, our cover stars in issue 37



45 Various Artists
Truckers, Kickers, Cowboy Angels Volumes 1 & 2
Bear Family, 2014



No rednecks here, just a consummate overview of country-rock's birth in LA and its baby steps courtesy of Parsons, Clark, Dylan, Dillard *et al.*

46 Damian Jurado
Brothers And Sisters Of The Eternal Son
Secretly Canadian, 2014



Master songwriter adds a layer of cosmic magic (courtesy of producer Richard Swift) to come up with a modern classic.

47 Foxygen
And Star Power
Jagjaguwar, 2014



We Are The 21st Century Ambassadors was their "pop" classic and this raucous, often insane and dangerous follow-up is its yang.

48 The Zakary Thaks
It's The End: The Definitive Collection
Big Beat, 2015



While there have been a fair few compilations of this most excellent Texas group's work over the years, none hits the mark quite like this one.

49 The Kitchen Cinq
When The Rainbow Disappears: An Anthology
Light In The Attic, 2015



Teen rock 'n' roll, powerpop, garage, wistful folk-rock or jangling psychedelia, mostly made for Lee Hazlewood's LHI label.

50 The Pretty Things
Bouquets From A Cloudy Sky
Madfish / Snapper, 2015



This colossal box set celebrating the Pretties' first half-century in business is literally mind-blowing in its depth, quality and presentation.

Tame Impala ushered in psych for indie kids and Temples ran with it

Contributors: Richard Allen, Christopher Budd, Mike Fornatale, Ian Fraser, Gregory Healey, Lenny Helsing, Jason Hobart, Henry Hutton, Jeanette Leech, Austin Matthews, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Andy Morten, Kris Needs, Paul Osbourne, Jeff Penczak, Tom Patterson, Paul Ritchie, Chris Twomey



A study of history.
John Renbourn
photographed in 1965



THE ETERNAL MUSICAL ADVENTURER

One of the world's most brilliant fingerstyle guitarists, **JOHN RENBOURN** first announced himself in 1964, working solo and then with Bert Jansch, before the pair formed Pentangle – a truly innovative group reflecting Renbourn's rich musical palette that encompassed folk, blues and jazz, early music and classical pieces. Renbourn never stopped exploring this diverse musical landscape during his long career.

MICK HOUGHTON draws from a series of conversations with Renbourn and Jacqui McShee, who sang with John across five decades, to paint a picture of folk's dramatic coming of age in the '60s

S ometime in 2008 I engineered a visit to Bert Jansch's Kilburn flat on a day when I knew he and John Renbourn were working together in the small studio at the rear of the garden. Bert's wife Loren ushered me down there, armed with revitalising mugs of tea. The two of them sat hunched purposefully over their guitars in a pose etched in the memory of classic images from 40 years back; all that was missing from the picture was a cigarette in the corner of John's mouth, with an inch of ash ready to drop off. "This is a real Lennon and McCartney moment for me," I blurted out as I stumbled through the door, spilling tea everywhere. They looked up at me with considerable kindness at the foolishness of a star truck fan. In my eyes, though, Bert and John meant just as much as John and Paul. If I'd said Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, they would have been more impressed.

I feel very fortunate to have known John in the last 10 years or so of his life. He had a delightfully dry sense of humour and was a joy to work with. He was always enormously helpful, particularly when I was researching my book on Sandy Denny and he generously tolerated me picking his brains about other friends and contemporaries such as Jackson C Frank, Alex Campbell, Davy Graham and Bert, of course.

Wherever I have played, the blues are all the same...

"I was obsessed with Josh White, my mother took me to see him when I was about 11 or 12; I was too young to go by myself. I had *The Josh White Guitar Method* book that came out in '56. He played in England a few times in the '50s and you'd even hear him on the radio. That's where my interest in blues recordings began and I still love his blues playing. In the '60s there were some who thought he wasn't authentic enough and too smooth but those old numbers he played are still great. For others the eye opener was when Chris Barber brought Big Bill Broonzy over to play here. He directly influenced a lot more home grown players, including Bert who saw him in Edinburgh.

"Muddy Waters came over in '58 and that came as a shock to people who had only heard acoustic blues. Skiffle was more or less over by then so plenty of people had acoustic guitars and knew the basic chords, but it was Muddy Waters' visit that led to electric bands forming. I tried to play R&B for a while.

"When I was knocking around in Guildford, before I got a place at Kingston Art School, I was in a band called Hogsnot Rupert & His Famous Porkestra. That riff from 'The Wildest Pig In Captivity' (dedicated to Hogsnot on Renbourn's debut album) was lifted from a James Brown song called 'Think'."

Hogsnot Rupert were on the fringes of the Guildford R&B scene, alongside groups like The Primevals, Andy Latimer's Phantom Four and The Stormsville Shakers, a parallel scene to the one along the Thames "blues delta" that took in Twickenham, Richmond and Kingston, where Renbourn soon enrolled at art college. Even before one of Kingston Art School's most

famous former students, Eric Clapton, joined The Yardbirds, the core of the group had formed there as The Metropolitan Blues Quartet.

"I went to the art school because I couldn't do anything else and it was a bit of a catch all for drop outs. Sandy Denny also enrolled at Kingston (a couple of years after him in '65). She went there for the same reasons as me, not to study art but to be in the swing of things. Plenty of music was being made there at the time. I mostly remember her sitting in the canteen beaming out pleasantries. She was taken under the wing of Gina Glaser, who was one of the models. Gina had arrived in London in '58. She was really beautiful, a pure singer, and she played guitar, banjo and dulcimer and knew people like banjo player Derroll Adams and Ramblin' Jack Elliott, and her father was a folk organiser. (Dave Van Ronk talks about her in his book, *The Mayor Of MacDougal Street*.)

"Sandy had a naturally good voice but Gina influenced her phrasing and repertoire and the difference was very noticeable. Gina was a key figure for me too because she played banjo and American style finger picking so it was a real thrill to watch her play close up. I learnt a lot." In his autobiography, Eric Clapton says much the same about Glaser. "She was the first American musician I had been anywhere near, and I was star struck. She had a beautiful clear voice and played an immaculate clawhammer style."

"By the time I went to Kingston, I wound up with an acoustic guitar because I had no money and that's all I could afford. I've never stopped playing blues; it's just resonated down the years and still sounds fresh in its original form and no matter how many times it gets repeated by one generation after another."

John Renbourn's first recordings were made using an English dance band guitar – a Scarth – which set him back a fiver. Much repaired over the years, using layers of ice lolly sticks pushed under the overhanging high fret board, he continued to use it up until his second album, *Another Monday*, in '66. The trusty Scarth can be heard on the self-titled *John Renbourn* (where it's pictured on the cover), two albums with Dorris Henderson and his first tracks with Bert Jansch.

Take two girls...

John Renbourn accompanied a number of girl singers after leaving Kingston, including Julie Felix and even Marianne Faithfull on a package tour that began in February '65, headlined by Roy Orbison. Beverley Martyn (*née* Kutner) sings a couple of blues songs with Renbourn on the forthcoming retrospective, *The Attic Tapes*. At the time she was a member of a jug band, The Levee Breakers, and also Bert Jansch's girlfriend. She's pictured on the cover of Bert's *It Don't Bother Me*, taken in the flat he shared with Renbourn at 30 Somali Road in Cricklewood.

Renbourn was associated with two singers in particular in the '60s; the first was Dorris Henderson. She was a vivacious black singer who arrived in London late in '64. She found her way first to The Troubadour before taking a regular spot at The Roundhouse off Wardour Street, where she invited John Renbourn to accompany her. They recorded two albums together in '66 and '67, *There You Go* and *Watch The Stars*. She also appears on Renbourn's *Faro Annie* in '71.

"I went to The Roundhouse (Wardour Street), one of the old skiffle places where Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies used to play. I played there with Gerry Lochran, who was another great blues player. One time I went to see Champion Jack Dupree and that's where I met Dorris.

"She was a hip, very modern woman who had heard it all before. She thought what we were all doing was so old-fashioned; she was more like Nina Simone in her attitude and her style was more like Roberta Flack. She used to play the autoharp which was as eye-catching as Dorris herself; nobody had seen one before. Dorris was a real force of nature on stage. We were all obsessed with the blues but she'd left that behind. She had sung in Greenwich Village folk clubs and in West Coast jazz clubs with Lord Buckley; we listened to him a lot in Somali Road, usually smashed."

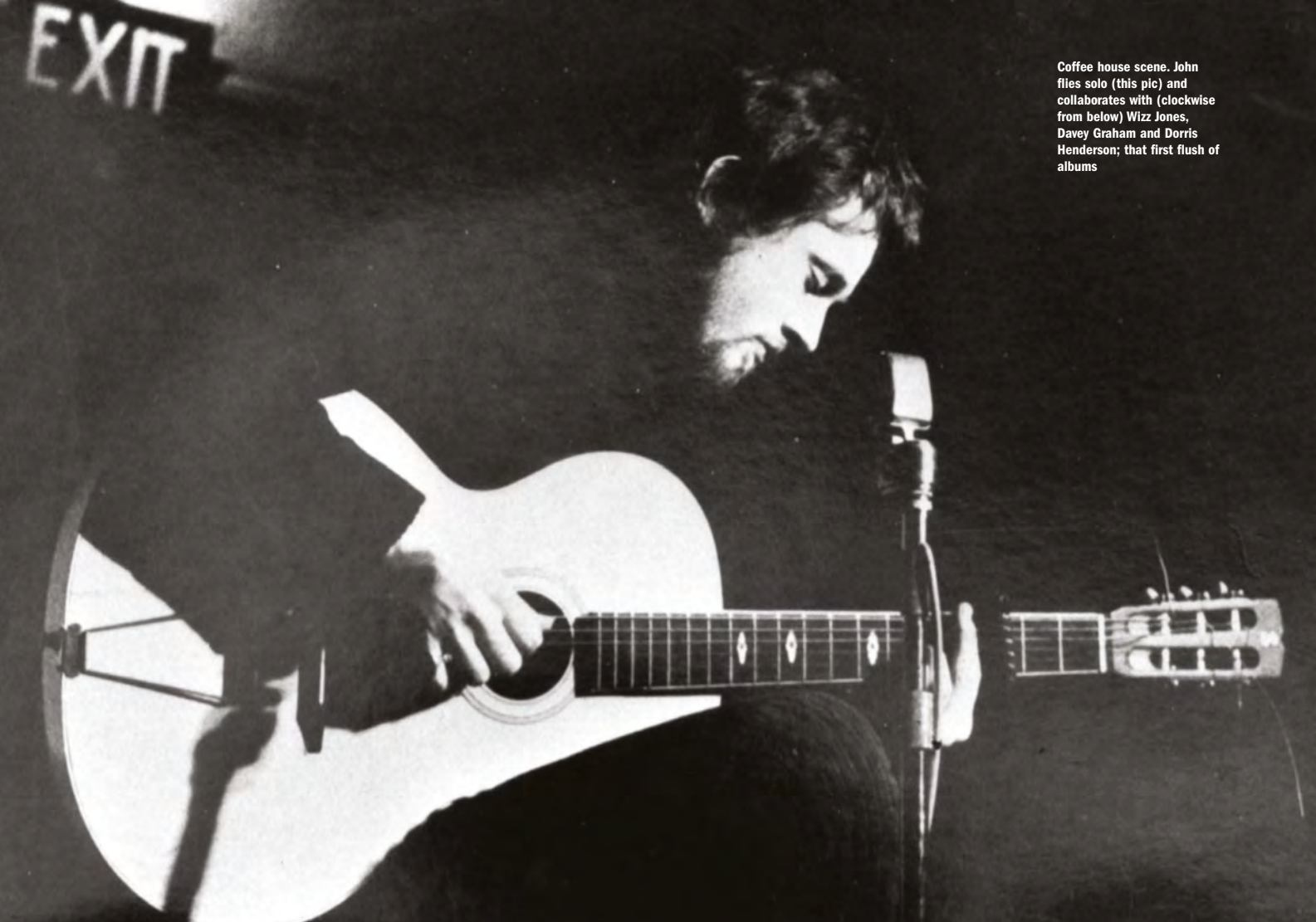
Jacqui McShee: "In '65 John played at the folk club I helped run, The Red Lion in Sutton, and we began singing together there and occasionally at Cousins. Quite by surprise he asked me if I'd sing on *Another Monday*. That was the start of it for me. John wasn't confident



"I wound up with an acoustic guitar because I had no money and that's all I could afford"

The young Turk.
On stage (this pic) and
on the street (opposite)
in the mid-60s





Coffee house scene. John flies solo (this pic) and collaborates with (clockwise from below) Wizz Jones, Davey Graham and Dorris Henderson; that first flush of albums



Courtesy of Roger M Kinsey



in his own singing; his wasn't a strong voice but it was always really effective. I think he'd get fed up with performing on his own and he liked playing with other people who had something different to offer. When I started singing with him it was because he wanted to discover more traditional songs."

Hound dogs, Bach addicts and Davy Graham...

"There was a funny ideology in the establishment crowd whereby a folk song a) shouldn't be accompanied, b) couldn't be accompanied and c) if the guitar was anywhere near, that was absolute heresy. They were very anti-guitar because it was considered to be American. There was all that nonsense going on. Peggy Seeger could play just about the best guitar and banjo you could hear. She was great; more influential than I can tell you. People would do anything to hear her playing if they could avoid hearing Ewan MacColl singing.

"(Unlike MacColl) Shirley Collins wasn't at all rigid in her outlook but she was highly regarded as a traditional singer. She and Davy were opposites as people so it was pretty remarkable that they ever recorded together. It didn't last but that record, *Folk Roots, New Routes*, changed everything. I first heard it with Dorris. We couldn't afford it and we went into a record booth to listen to it.

"Before that I used to follow Davy around anyway, we all did. Along with Bert and Martin Carthy they were the ones everybody looked to. *Folk Roots, New Routes* had a huge impact on us all. It showed that nothing was sacrosanct. It took people like Martin Carthy, Bert and Davy to make it acceptable to accompany traditional folk song with the guitar. Bert learnt a lot through working with Anne Briggs and for a while his guitar playing mirrored her singing. That's how *Jack Orion* came about; they worked on those songs together."

The Cousins...

Les Cousins Club Continental had opened in autumn '64 with a broad musical policy that never found an audience until it re-opened the following year and soon became the hub of the more alternative folk scene alongside other Soho venues like The Scots Hoose, The Roundhouse and Bunjies off Charing Cross Road. Most likely Cousins re-opened in March although the date usually given is 16th April '65, which coincided with the release of Bert Jansch's self-titled debut.

"The purist clubs were just sheer hell for someone like me or Bert, we didn't do things their way. Bert once played at one of Ewan's clubs, The Singers Club, where he played 'Anji' and was asked to leave. He never went back.

"To begin with, the Cousins was a shady, derelict scene, full of dossers and not the springboard to fame and fortune as it's presented later. It was never that, however much people romanticise about it now. It was just a word of mouth joint with no stage at first but everybody who was anybody and plenty who weren't all played there over the years."

"Bert once played at one of Ewan's clubs, The Singers Club, where he played 'Anji' and was asked to leave. He never went back"

Catch a boat to England...

Jackson C Frank arrived in London just as Les Cousins re-opened and was at the forefront of the first wave of singer-songwriters establishing themselves on the folk circuit alongside Bert Jansch and fellow American Paul Simon.



EXTRA JOHN #1

John in house band on BBC2 pop show!

After John hooked up with African-American singer Dorris Henderson in 1965, she caught the attention of the makers of BBC2's new Monday night "pop" show, *Gadzooks (It's All Happening)*, and John was requested to accompany her. It was there that he met future Pentangle colleagues Danny Thompson and Terry Cox, who were members of the show's house band, fronted and directed by blues man Alexis Korner. John found himself appearing frequently on the show during its short lifespan (all 17 episodes broadcast between February and July '65 are believed to be lost).



"Jackson came across as quite different from the rest of the layabout crowd because he had some money (from the insurance claim after the fire where he was disfigured and many of his school friends died); he was well dressed considering that the style in those days was to be as badly dressed as possible. He was quiet, had a nice sense of humour, laconic, laidback, easy but never pushy. He played a Martin guitar in a very clean finger picking style that obviously drew, with respect, on traditional sources, but was his own patent so it wasn't just a copy. What he played sounded really rootsy because he'd listened to a lot of good old time picking and he'd got it down. He'd played a lot of blues in the past and traditional material like 'Kimble' and he wrote some terrific songs like 'Blues Run The Game' and 'Carnival' – all in all he was the complete package. In the very early days of singer-songwriters, he was the best.

"I was never that taken with singer-songwriters but a few things Jackson Frank would sing, certainly hit the mark. Bert admired him and don't forget, Bert, on the whole, was head and shoulders above everybody else on the scene. Bert was his own man and when he played and sang there was nobody you could compare him to. So the fact that he played some of Jackson's songs was a measure of how good he was."

Bert And John...

In a revealing interview in *Terrascope*, Bert recalled the first time he saw John Renbourn play and being impressed by his "clawhammer" style guitar at about 100 miles an hour..." Like much of their shared history there's plenty of conjecture but Renbourn first witnessed Jansch play – sometime in late '64 – at The Scots Hoose (some accounts say it was Bunjies). After the first set, Renbourn went outside where Jansch was supposedly throwing up in the gutter. The two wound up later that night at somebody's flat smoking dope. They ended up sharing three flats together between '65 and the end of '67. *Jack Orion* and *Bert And John*, simultaneously released in August '66, sealed their partnership.

"We never played a lot of those tunes [from *Bert And John*] again because they were completely improvised in the flat and we couldn't remember them. And Bill [Leader, arguably the most important sound recordist in UK folk music] would ask, 'What's that one called?', so we usually made up titles on the spot. If people requested anything from *Bert And John* we could never play it. Even 'Goodbye Pork Pie Hat' bore little resemblance to the Mingus original. I'm still trying to learn how to play that."

Jacqui: "I don't think John was overshadowed by Bert. They were so different but when Pentangle played you always had the first three rows, usually boys, just watching Bert and John's fingers and trying to figure out what they were doing. Bert got more recognition because he wrote songs. John was never interested in being a songwriter.

"Bert could never jam which John could and John was more technical and organised than Bert who probably learnt more from John than



The might Pentangle in action with John (playing sitar), Danny Thompson, Jacqui McShee, Terry Cox and Bert Jansch

John did from him because Bert was more instinctive. John could play anything. Blues was his first love but his interest in early music was always there from when he was growing up. He liked all kinds of music including rock 'n' roll and R&B, and jazz of course. His taste was really eclectic."

Renbourn's *Sir John A Lot Of Merrie England* ('68) and *The Lady And The Unicorn* ('70) effectively defined his interest in early music, even if he might combine or offset a medieval piece with an obscure Booker T song like 'Sweet Potato' or Charles Lloyd's 'Transfusion'.

"I don't think in terms of this is blues or jazz or medieval music and should be done this way or that way; I never drew lines between music.

There were no instructions that came with it and Pentangle grew out of that way or thinking but not because we sat down and talked about it, we just played and improvised and that was the result."

Pentangling...

In January '67 Jansch and Renbourn started their own weekly club at The Horseshoe on Tottenham Court Road where Jacqui McShee would sing with them and friends such as Martin Carthy, Sandy Denny and Carl Palmer turned up if they weren't working. It ran throughout that year but it was only after Danny Thompson and Terry Cox – then the resident rhythm section at Ronnie Scott's – began to sit in each week that Pentangle

gradually became an entity.

Jacqui: "We used to rehearse at the flat John shared with Bert by the zoo (St Edmunds Terrace, St John's Wood where the *Bert And John* cover photo was taken) and one day John just announced, 'We're starting a band and you're the singer.' Nat Joseph (Transatlantic Records boss) wasn't happy about the band forming at all. He thought Bert and John should remain solo. The contract was drawn up so that Bert and John would employ three other musicians. They got paid a regular wage of £22.50 from the gigs and the three of us would split the rest of the money between us. Sometimes we earned more than they did."

The catalyst to Pentangle becoming a serious



“We never worried whether it was ideologically sound to mix jazz and folk or blues and medieval music. None of us were contorted with intellectual problems about the meaning of folk music”


“I don’t think anybody called Pentangle a supergroup. Outside of our respective circles most people didn’t even know who we were. We were just a new band starting out. In the same way people now describe the *Bert And John* album as ‘folk-baroque’ (he laughed when I suggested it’s now ‘seminal acid-folk’), most of it we made up on the spot. We never worried whether it was ideologically sound to mix jazz and folk or blues and medieval music. None of us were contorted with intellectual problems about the meaning of folk music.”

Pentangle were swept along for five years, relentlessly touring in Europe and North

America where they played just about every folk, jazz and rock festival and every major concert hall and rock venue, still finding time to make six albums.

Jacqui: “John was devastated when Bert said the band was finished. He said, ‘Who says the band is finished?’ And I said, ‘I’m sure it’s over’. He said, ‘I don’t think so’ but we had a break from touring at the end of ’72. None of us were good at communicating so we never talked about it and that’s how it came to end... with a bit of a whimper.”

Over the next 40 years John Renbourn explored the breadth of his musical passions on solo albums, with *The John Renbourn Group* and *Ship Of Fools*, collaborating on record or touring with lifelong friends Stefan Grossman, Robin Williamson, Jacqui McShee and Wizz Jones, among others. He studied, taught and wrote about music, and even reunited with Pentangle for dates in 2008 and 2011. The resulting live album should surface next year.

Jacqui: “You asked what my memory of John is and I started to smile. I just think of all the daft things that happened and all the scrapes we got into, the adventures we had. John would always talk about having adventures. John was so eccentric. You only had to visit him in the last place he lived in the Scottish borders. It was a converted chapel in Borthwick Bay, Harwick, a beautiful place but really isolated and he loved being there alone. He would drive down for a gig and drive six hours straight home again; he even bought a van so he could sleep at a service station if it was too far to get back. John was such a big character, larger than life in every sense. He really didn’t look after himself and he was never going to change. The long drives – as we now realise – must have taken their toll.” 

John Renbourn’s official website includes a full chronology and annotated discography, entertainingly and modestly written by the man himself.

The Attic Tapes is released by Riverboat Records in October and features the earliest recordings of many of John’s favourite blues and instrumentals.

Bert Jansch’s It Don’t Bother Me, Bert And John and Jack Orion, featuring significant contributions from John Renbourn, are re-issued on vinyl by Sanctuary Records.



EXTRA JOHN #2

John plays on David Bowie’s first album!

It’s not that well documented that in the months preceding Pentangle’s 1967 formation, John Renbourn had contributed acoustic guitar to ‘Come And Buy My Toys’ on David Bowie’s *DERAM* debut. Bowie clearly felt he needed some authentic finger-picking accompaniment for this rare venture into acoustic folk, which was clearly influenced by Simon & Garfunkel’s recently-released *Scarborough Fair / Canticle*, which also lends the song its “cambric shirt” lyric. Bowie’s ability on the guitar at this early juncture has freely been called into question, not least by the man himself, and many of his late ’60s sides employed session men. Indeed, Pentangle drummer Terry Cox would go on to appear on ‘Space Oddity’ in early ’69.



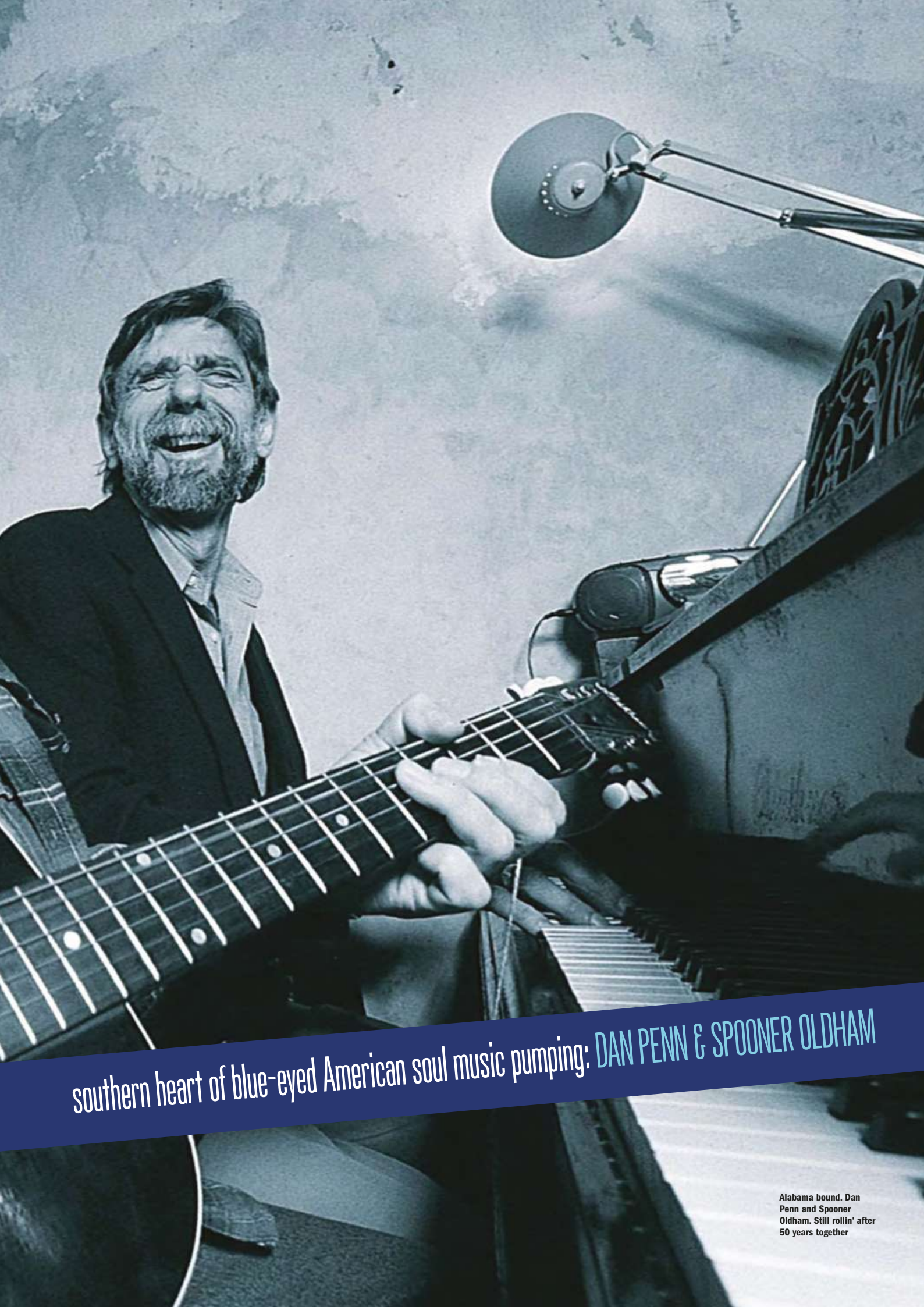
venture was when they acquired manager Jo Lustig, a brash American who had successfully launched Julie Felix’s career. He took the band on in February ’68, and immediately shut down *The Horseshoe* and withdrew them all from playing folk clubs to create a demand for a hyped-up Pentangle in the wake of their Shel Talmy-produced debut album.

“Jo Lustig was a PR man of the old school. Barnum and Bailey probably used him. But he was tone deaf. That’s not a joke, he really was. His forte was drumming up publicity and no shot was too cheap. I think he even announced that Prince Charles wanted to be in the band. I will say this for him though, he knew better than to try and impose on the music.”



DO RIGHT MEN

HUGH DELLAR chokes back the tears as he sets off in search of the men that keep the deep



southern heart of blue-eyed American soul music pumping: **DAN PENN & SPOONER OLDHAM**

Alabama bound. Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham. Still rollin' after 50 years together



Penn and Oldham at work in the mid-60s; Jimmy Johnson (guitar), Wilson Pickett, Spooner Oldham, (keyboards), Roger Hawkins (drums), David Hood (bass) at FAME Studios in '66; Aretha and the crew (Oldham to her right) in '67; assorted classic '60s Penn/Oldham creations

The single bullet fired from the Remington Model 760 that entered the right cheek of Doctor Martin Luther King Jr as he stood on the balcony outside his room in The Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee shattered far more than the great man's jawbone and vertebrae. In many ways, the assassination of Dr King on Thursday April the 4th 1968 also smashed the fragile peace between blacks and whites that had developed in the south in the wake of advances forced by The Civil Rights Movement. In the decade or so since Rosa Parks had sparked the Montgomery bus boycott, segregation in schools, work and public places had been outlawed and all black Americans had won the right to vote. Yet racism remained ever-present and optimism was a rare commodity best kept close to the heart and kindled time and again.

A short trawl across town from The Lorraine Motel, which today houses The National Civil Rights Museum, brings you to 827 Thomas Street, home then to American Sound Studio, a recording space started the previous year by writer and producer Lincoln Wayne 'Chips' Moman and Don Crews. In its brief five-year existence the studio spawned over 100 hits, bringing out the best in everyone from Bobby Womack and Joe Tex to Dusty Springfield and Elvis. Busy beaver away behind the scenes at American Sound was one Wallace Daniel Pennington, better known as Dan Penn, producer and songwriter extraordinaire.

As fury erupted at the killing by James Earl Ray, a fugitive petty criminal with known white supremacist leanings, and as conspiracy theories about the hidden hands behind the gunman swirled across the city, the first riots began – and invisible battle lines were drawn across the terrain. One impact of this harsh new polarised age was a drying up of the once steady stream of black performers keen to work with both Penn and American Sound. Not that anyone was ready to face it just yet, but the party was drawing to a close and leaner times lay ahead.

And what a party it had been! Born in Molloy, Alabama in '41, Penn came from a musical background, with his mother playing piano, his father the guitar and both being heavily involved in the church. His family moved to the Florence / Muscle Shoals area in the '50s and during his teenage years he immersed himself

in black rhythm 'n' blues. "I spent a lot of time glued right up close to my green transistor radio, listening to deejay John R on WLAC out of Nashville. He was playing spirituals, R&B... and my heroes back then were Jimmy Reed and Ray Charles and James Brown. My ears knew that good was good. And I just kept on leaning that way."

By the end of the '50s, all the influences and input were bearing fruit and Dan was starting to pour forth songs, the earliest of which he ran by fellow Alabama musician Billy Sherrill (who went on to work at Sun and later became a legendary Nashville producer). Impressed by what he heard, Sherrill recommended Penn pay a visit to Tom Stafford, who'd recently established SPAR studios above The City Drug Store in Florence. It was to be a trip that would open the doors to the rest of Dan Penn's life. "I went up these stairs, it's the middle of the day, around noon, and I knocked on this door. The door opens, and there's three or four big beds in there, all full of guys sleeping, you know, and I just thought to myself, 'Now THIS is my kind of place.'"

Penn laid down a few demos that day which led to his first real recording. 'Crazy Over You' / 'You Don't Treat Me Right' came out as quite possibly the sole release on the local Earth Records in June '59, and the flipside in particular showed a burgeoning and most distinctive talent: spare and stripped down, doused in reverb, melancholic in mood with its many minor chords and over in less than two

minutes, it hinted at heavier heart-wrenches to come. The demos also resulted in his first hit, as Conway Twitty picked up on an unused cut, 'Is A Bluebird Blue', and took it to #35 in the national charts. Beneath the syrupy overlay of strings – and despite its novelty title – the song swaggered with a gritty carnality.

This early success, though, was not without its pitfalls. "I'd been doing some drinking and I guess my momma was having trouble with me. My aunt Margaret said to send me to her in Dallas, where she'd watch over me and get me a job. So that's what I did... till one night I was out on a date with a lil' local girl, and we pulled into a Dairy Queen. There were these guys outside with an amp and a microphone all coming through the one speaker, trying to play some songs and stuff, and it just came to me, 'Man, I sure would like to play a song'. I'd been in Dallas three months. I asked them and they said sure, you go ahead, so I played some songs, got back in the car, and said to this girl, 'That's it. Tomorrow I'm going to go to Alabama, and I'm going to play music.' From there on in, I just did what I could."

Back home, the landscape had slightly shifted and the new kid on the block was the FAME (short for Florence Alabama Music Enterprise) Studio, initially situated in an old tobacco warehouse on Wilson Dam Road and the brainchild of Sherrill and a former SPAR producer, farmer's son Rick Hall. The studio very quickly started living up to its optimistic moniker and in '61 local hotel worker Arthur



"I spent a lot of time glued right up close to my green transistor radio. My heroes back then were Jimmy Reed and Ray Charles and James Brown"



Alexander cut 'You Better Move On', storming up to #24 on the nationwide charts. Watching the hit-maker in action provided Penn with guidance at a crucial time. "I learned a lot from Arthur – just from being around him. The most important thing he showed us – and it's a tough, tough thing to teach folks when they're young – is how to keep things simple."

Also crucially influential on Penn's approach to his craft were the song-pitching trips to Nashville he was making with Rick Hall. He was quick to notice that the local moguls they touted tracks to often ventured no further into a tune than its opening few bars, leading him to start fronting the titles as early on in his own pieces as he could manage.

While still playing with what would soon settle into being the first FAME house band, The Mark V (who underwent a name change and became Dan Penn & The Pallbearers following the acquisition of a black hearse for transportation purposes), it was right around now that Penn started writing in earnest. Working sporadically with Donnie Fritts (who a decade or so later went on to record the criminally under-rated *Prone To Lean* album and to be Kris Kristofferson's keyboard player for the best part of 40 years), Penn soon started coming up with more gold. 'Sorry I'm Late, Lisa', a cracked soul ballad lilting right on the cusp of country, was the B-side of a '63 Tommy Roe hit, 'Everybody', while 'Rainbow Road' was covered by everyone from Arthur Alexander to



Percy Sledge to PJ Proby (though Bill Brandon's deep Tower 45 rendition remains definitive, to these ears at least). However, it was collaboration with another of the backroom boys at FAME that was to provide Penn with, if not his greatest moments, then at least his most enduring partnership.

A native of Center Star, Alabama, Lindon Dewey Oldham, known to all as Spooner, was almost two years Penn's junior, stick thin, and had managed to become increasingly in-demand as a piano and keyboard session man. Having cut his teeth on the local live circuit with Hollis Brown & The Key Notes, and coming from a background steeped more in country music, Oldham's playing was laconic, soulful and possessed of true grit – much like the man himself. The duo quickly established a working pattern, hitting the FAME studios early

evening as the day's sessions were winding up, and putting in all-night shifts. Buoyed up with the occasional assistance of truckers' little helpers, the two would chip away at ideas, working intuitively and utterly in tandem – Penn on guitar, Oldham on keys – towards sketched-out songs, which they'd then demo and play back on the studio speakers. Soon the floodgates were starting to crack: the Black Diamond, Mr Joe Simon, had first stab at the taut ballad 'Let's Do it Over'; The Ovations fronted by Louis Williams gave 'I'm Living Good' the full Sam Cooke treatment; and Oldham himself (as Spooner & The Spoons) turned out a perfect dancefloor-friendly piece, 'Wish You Didn't Have To Go'.

Penn also continued to release his own recordings during this time. Under the pseudonym Lonnie Ray (inflicted upon him as one of Rick Hall's many ruses), he lay down a sublime broke-up ballad 'Take Me As I Am', and 'I'm Your Puppet', released on MGM late '65, replete with a slightly unnecessary slathering of Nashville sugar and strings, was soon picked up on by James & Bobby Purify and turned into yet another smash. Dan had also been silently soaking up as much as he could about the workings of the studio, learning the ropes whilst fetching burgers and cigarettes. Feeling closed down on this front at FAME, it was his desire to immerse himself more in the production side of things that led to a big move northwards in the summer of '66. Memphis, the home of Stax and Hi, was beckoning.



PERCY SLEDGE

out of left field

can't be stopped



Waiting for the fall.
Spooner Oldham at the
time of his '72 *Pot Luck*
album; Penn's '73 outing,
Nobody's Fool; Penn in the
late '70s



"I was in American Studios working on a Box Tops record. Chips called me up and said, 'Dan, you've get outta there, they've shot Martin Luther King' "



Having already befriended Chips Moman on his frequent visits down to Muscle Shoals, Penn was thus able to walk on through into perhaps the most golden phase of his career. With Oldham's loyalties keeping him in Muscle Shoals until a replacement musician could be found, Moman and Penn started writing – and within weeks had come up with perhaps the two greatest cuts in the whole southern soul canon: 'Do Right Woman, Do Right Man', a massive hit for Lady Aretha, and the taut and tragic tale of forbidden love, 'Dark End Of The Street', initially cut with such devastating intensity and drama by James Carr.

He also proved his production chops when placed behind the desk for the debut single by local likely lads The Box Tops, fronted by the precociously talented, gravel-throated 16-year-old Alex Chilton. Following a blazing row with Moman, sparked by Penn's insistence on retaining the dubbed-on sounds of an airplane taking off, the resulting 'The Letter' was put out by Bell subsidiary Mala and became a global sensation, ending up as the second biggest-selling single of '67 Stateside – and topping charts everywhere from Norway to Israel to Chile.

By the time the song had started its meteoric ascent, Spooner too had upped sticks to Memphis. The pair returned to writing, and Lord how they wrote. One upshot of this recouping was The Box Tops' second huge hit, 'Cry Like A Baby': its title derived from a comment uttered by a forlorn and exhausted Oldham, despairing of ever coming up with a decent follow-up, the song was propelled into the extraordinary by session man Reggie

Young, who added the kind of electric sitar riffs that did not normally keep company with gospel singers or brass and string sections.

Other tracks of note from this purple patch include Dee Dee Sharp's tender, late night pleading 'Help Me Find My Groove', which rises and falls as Spooner stabs away at the Hammond; the fragile throb of 'Dreamer', which when cut by Patti LaBelle & The Bluebells for Atlantic, hovered just above the ground like some spectral 4AM visitation; and 'I Worship The Ground You Walk On', delivered to Cadet by Etta James as a guttural, testifying, energised entreaty.

It was just as life seemed that it could truly get no better that news of the shooting down of Dr King broke. "I was in American Studios working on a Box Tops record," recalls Dan, "and Chips called me up and said, 'Dan, you've get outta there, they've shot Martin Luther King'. By the time I was in the car and around the corner, the air had already started to take on a meanness. And the real sadness is that up until that point, there'd been no real tensions between races or whatever in Memphis. It was all lovey-dovey but then, just like a guillotine, it separated." The result was, as Spooner chipped in, that "nothing changed – but everything changed."

Now of course, at this juncture it's only right to point out that a white man's perception of race relations is always open to accusations of being rose-tinted and that many everyday indignities and injustices may easily have been unknown to the pair. That notwithstanding, it remains the case that in a Jim Crow age, Penn, Oldham and

many of the local music scenesters – both white and black – were living embodiments of integration in action. As Dan reflects on the pre-assassination era, "Sure we knew there were problems, but I wasn't close to them. I'd see it on the news, but I'd go to the studio and we would be all okay, and we were all okay out on the street as well. It sure wasn't everywhere."

As the decade drew to a close, the ever forthright Penn and Moman were reaching the end of their collective tether. As Dan remembers it, the pair were "just two people who couldn't live in the same pea pod. He was a real talented cat, but very jealous too. Take 'The Letter'. Even though that made him rich, the day we cut that was a sad day for Chips. He'd been making mini-hits and I slipped on in and cut the biggest one of the period. The writing was already on the board from there. And of course, I was still young back then, and if there's one thing young folk like to do, it's move." Gathering together his earnings from the hits, and taking advantage of a banking climate still real keen on lending, Penn ploughed a whole heap of cash into his own establishment known, quite rightly, as Beautiful Sounds. Despite being in possession of the first 16-track in the city, though, the work never arrived in the volumes he was expecting.

Large swathes of the city's black community were busy retreating from engagement and an unofficial, politically driven self-segregation was in operation. This, coupled with Penn's reputation for being, shall we say, ornery on occasion – and unpredictable due to personal predilections – hit hard. While partying more on the back of his successes, he found the muse



FEED THE FLAME

PAUL RITCHIE picks five of Penn and Oldham's best

The Ovations, standing



THE OVATIONS

I'm Living Good

This sublime slice of feel good soul first appeared as a single on Goldwax in 1965. A better version appeared in '69, with added strings and horns, ditching the original *passé* spoken word intro. Arthur Conley revived the song for Capricorn in '71 but failed to turn this timeless, uplifting hymn into a hit.

ETTA JAMES

I Worship The Ground You Walk On

Even in the hands of mere mortals, the qualities of this track are undisputed, but James takes the song by the scruff of the neck and throttles it into submission with her inimitable powerfully unhinged delivery. Cut at FAME, the track featured on the flip of her cover of Sonny & Cher's 'I Got You Babe' on Cadet.

THE ENTERTAINERS

I Need Someone

Stately ballad released by The Wallace Brothers on Jewel and by Dan Penn on MGM. This must-hear, stripped down demo first appeared on Ace's *Hall Of Fame* CD in 2012. A solitary piano, exquisite male group harmonies and a yearning lead vocal reveal the song's true genius.

BJ THOMAS

I've Been Down This Road Before

This one was a co-write with Mark James who famously penned 'Suspicious Minds'. A spiritual feeling runs through many Penn/Oldham songs that reflect their deep love and understanding of R&B but their country roots are often recognisable too. This poignant, reflective ballad with aching strings was one of the finest productions of its kind.

DAN PENN

Come Into My Heart

Dan Penn was no slouch when it came to singing. His early demos captured on the Ace compilation, *The Fame Recordings*, showed how he could easily emulate his idols with gusto. This one diverts from the southern soul/R&B genre, soaking up inspiration from pop contemporaries such as Phil Spector and The Supremes.

started visiting far less frequently. As he puts it himself, "I got a little strung out – and it sounded like it. I never got into heavy drugs, thank God, but what it became was ... heavy use of the most common drugs. I was stoned and drunk and I didn't take care of business. Suddenly I was having more bills than income from the studio." As for so many others around the world, the dawning of the '70s came both cold and cruel. There was a *Changin' Tymes* 45 and the *Ilmo Smokehouse* LP, but the once bottomless well was starting to run dry.

Spooner, meanwhile, had married and left Memphis for LA, the final straw being rushing home from a session in New York to find his house burned down and the ruins looted in his absence. The City of Angels proved kind and he was soon cutting sessions with everyone from The Flying Burrito Brothers and Gene Clark to Jim Croce and even Liberace! Remarkably, out of all this upheaval and change, the pair wound up cutting their debut solo albums, released within a few months of each other.

Oldham's recently reissued *Pot Luck* came out in '72 on Family Productions, and was produced by Ed Cobb. The idiosyncratic chicken leg image wound up on the front after Spooner found himself taken aback by the label's first suggestion – a piece of psychedelic erotica featuring naked ladies grooving in the smoke from his cigarette! A classic the album is probably not, and the lengthy second side segue of previous hits is barely better than bizarre lounge bar bad, but the opener – written with Penn on one of his trips out west – "The Lord Loves A Rolling Stone" is deep southern gospel goodness, the vocal just this side of cracked and wavering, and all the better for it; 'Julie Brown's Forest' is as powerful as anything Leon Russell was producing at the time and 'Life's Little Package Of Puzzles' is pure country home-cooking.

Penn used the plentiful downtime afforded him by a studio not exactly running at full capacity to put together, over six or seven months, his own solo outing, *Nobody's Fool*, which came out on Bell in '73. From the opening title track, with

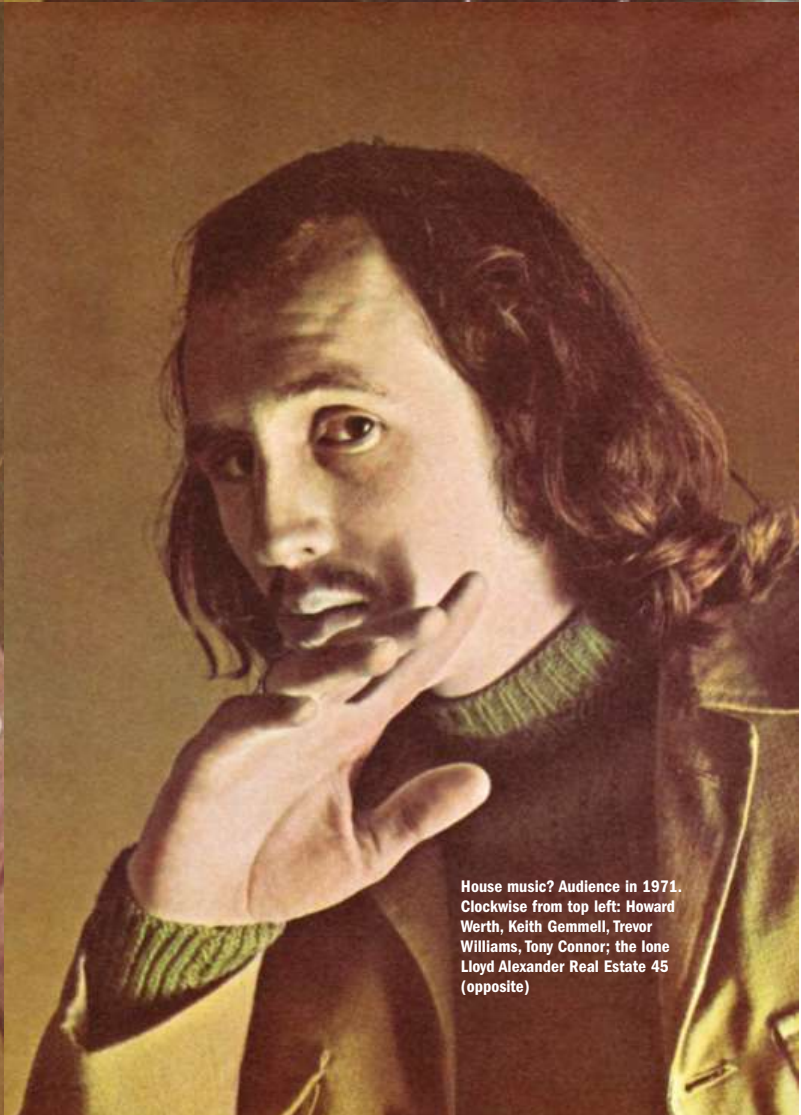
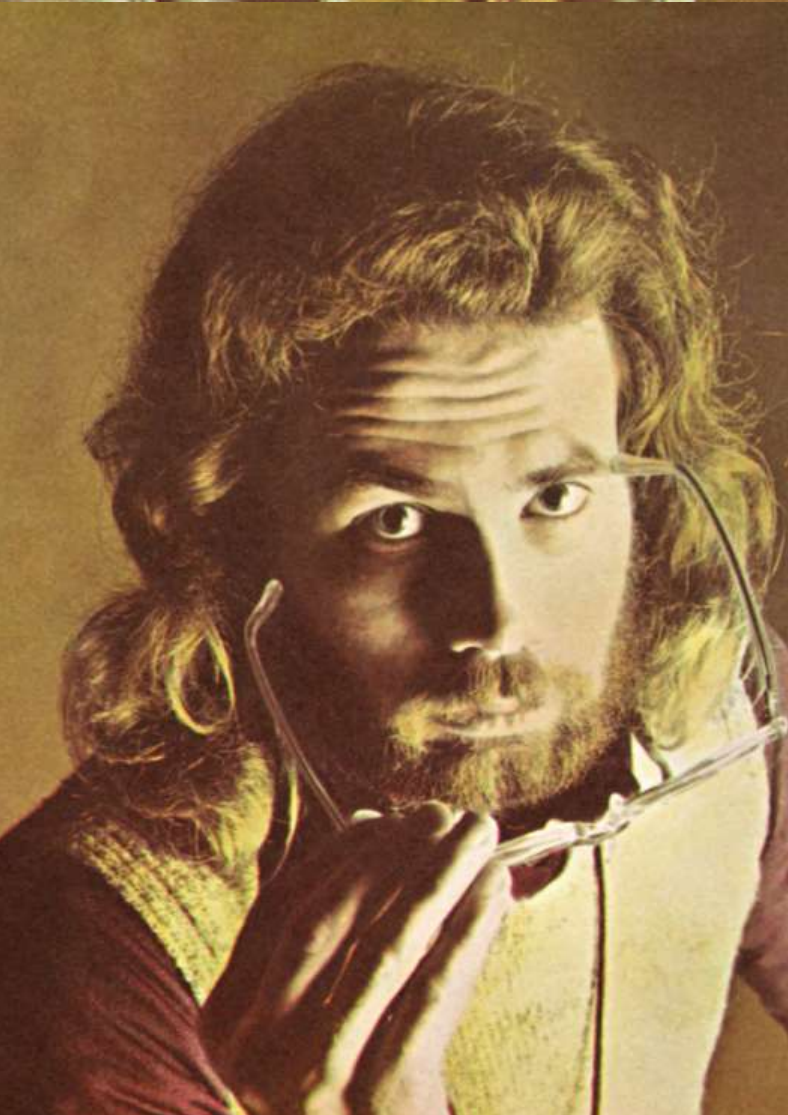
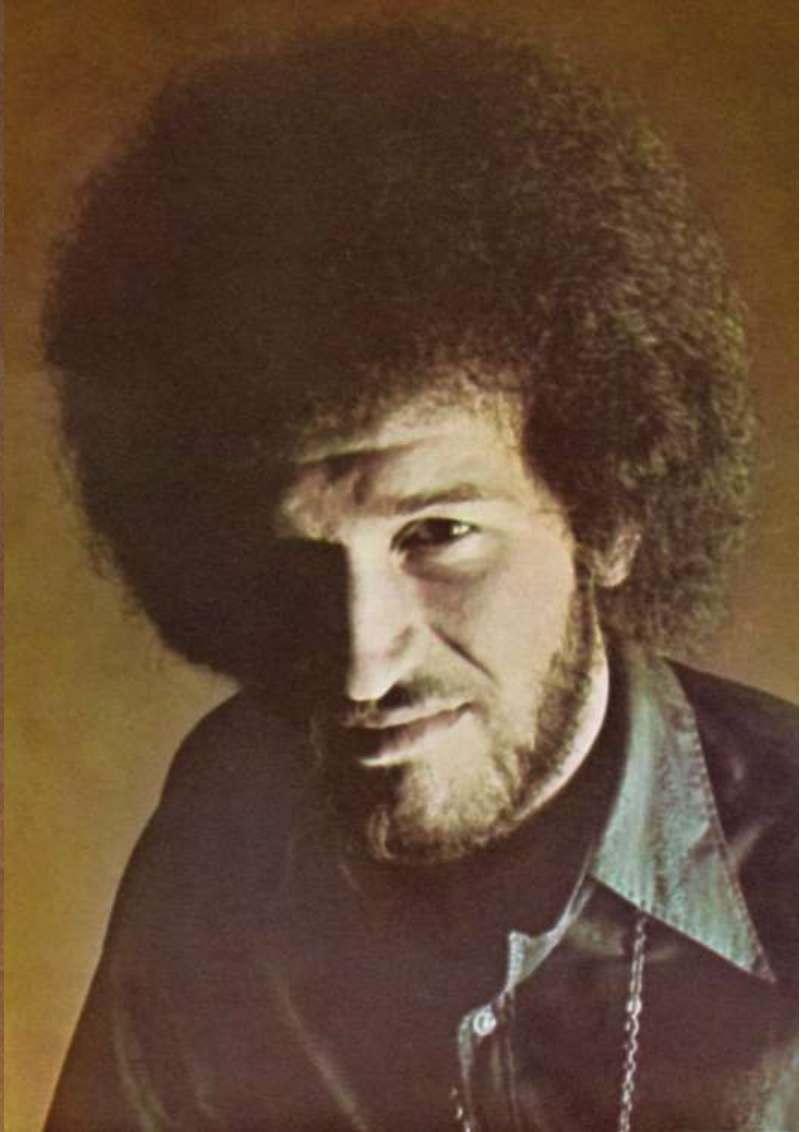
its understated late-night vocal sitting snugly on top of the warm strains of the Nashville Horns and Strings right through to the closing spoken-word epic 'Skin' – a hushed rumination on the state of the nation over backwards '40s film music and Christmas sounds, which comes on like a backwoods white boy *What's Going On?* in dungarees – the album is a lost gem, currently screaming out for someone to do it justice with a legitimate reissue. The 45 that was taken from the album – 'Prayer For Peace' and 'If Love Was Money' – somehow failed to become the runaway smash it deserved to be, perhaps in part due to the fact the wrong track got the nod for the A-side.

Musical partnerships, tendencies and preferences aside, what united the two recordings was the fact that both then fell off into the void, receiving next to no radio play, publicity or acclaim. Though, of course, as is often the way, one decade's bargain bin staples have gone on to become a new century's collectables. By '74, Beautiful Sound was on its last legs, Moman had closed up shop and left town, and even the once-mighty Stax Records was failing. With a heavy heart, Penn shut up shop and moved to Nashville, where he's been mostly ever since, continuing to write and produce beneath the radar, while Oldham went from one super-session to the next way out west.

The story could, of course, have ended here had it not been for Penn's severely belated second solo LP, *Do Right Man*, sneaking out in '94, and the duo returning to the stage together for the first time in a quarter of a century. And the rest, as I'm sure y'all know, is now history. [S]

Pot Luck is out now on vinyl and CD on Light In The Attic.

A big thanks to Spooner Oldham and Dan Penn for their time and southern hospitality, to Joss Hutton for his help and sharing of sources, and to Will Lawrence at In House Press and Neil Scaplehorn at Ace Records for photos.



House music? Audience in 1971.
Clockwise from top left: Howard
Werth, Keith Gemmell, Trevor
Williams, Tony Connor; the lone
Lloyd Alexander Real Estate 45
(opposite)

MOONSHINE KINGDOM

Over four hectic years, **HOWARD WERTH** and his band **AUDIENCE** undertook an extraordinary journey from East London pub gigs to the verge of replacing The Doors as Elektra Records' house band in the USA. Along the way they produced four unique albums, whose style, wit and approach set them apart from their peers, but ultimately may have hastened their demise at the hands of a fickle music industry.

Werth tells **GREG HEALEY** about experimentation, graphic design and Little England

Howard Werth was a keen fan of rock 'n' roll and jazz, and played guitar from the age of 10. It was an art school education that played an important role in the development of his creative talents. "I was taught by Peter Blake and a lot of the pop-art artists," he begins. "It was all at the beginning of The Beatles and it was all happening. It was a very exciting period. It was a great time to be in London, with all those influences, both musical and from the art and the fashion world all conglomerating. It created a very creative period. It gave you an idea that you weren't restricted by a specific formula and that you could draw on lots of different things and bring them together. I think that was partly what Audience did. As for musical styles, we weren't restricted at all. We'd never think, oh no, you can't do that. That would inspire us in the opposite direction and make us think, yeah, you *can* do that. A bit of Russian with some medieval and some American R&B, mixing it up was what we were doing."

Werth's day job, as a graphic artist working for IPC Magazines in the heart of London, helped keep him in touch with what was going on in the capital and he was a regular at many of the hotspots. "You had the UFO Club. I remember going down when The Soft Machine and Pink Floyd played regularly, and it being emptied out by the police. Trevor [Williams, Audience

bassist] got to see Captain Beefheart down at The Electric Garden as it was called at the time."

Werth's early musical interests led to the formation of an R&B group called The Lloyd Alexander Real Estate that played the semi-pro circuit of the East End. By late 1968, in response to all that was happening around them, this formed the basis of Audience, with his friends Williams (bass), Keith Gemmel (sax) and John Richardson (drums).

Right from the very beginning, the style of the new group's music was to be determined by a desire to do things in their own way. Even their choice of instrumentation was different to that of their peers. Werth's unique voice, his nylon-strung acoustic, along with Gemmell's effects-laden flute, sax and clarinet work, would all play a part. "I was playing a nylon-strung acoustic guitar at home a lot, because I didn't want to annoy the neighbours with loud music," explains Werth. "I really got into it and really enjoyed the feel of it. I used to think that





it would be great if I could get an electric nylon-strung guitar that I could play through an amp, but no such thing existed. Until one day I walked past a music shop in London and there it was in the window: an electric nylon-strung guitar. That was it, I'd found it. Eventually I was used as their advertising as I think I was the first person to actually play one of those. Then I heard someone in one of the shops in the West End with a flute through an echo machine and I thought, wow. And that triggered us off and we started putting instruments through all sorts of effects like wah-wah. It was a case of trying things out and seeing what works. Anything to bend the sound a bit."

The quartet first took to the stage in early '69. Within six weeks they were snapped up by Polydor Records and heading to Morgan Studios to record their eponymous first album. The result of a contact through the band's soon to be ex-drummer, their deal came about as Richardson pursued a career in television. "John, who was later in The Rubettes, had other things up his sleeve and left the band. He'd got to do some kids' TV work with Ayshea, the wife of Chris Brough from Polydor. Chris came down to see us and that was it."

The first album was to arrive almost fully formed, with the band achieving their signature sound from the very beginning. "None of the

material was very old and things came together in the studio very quickly," explains Werth. "We worked together really well. I'd come up with an idea and Trevor would go off and come back with some lyrics. It went from there."

What would become a defining characteristic of Audience's material, its narrative content, expressed both lyrically and musically, but with humour, was also present. "Humour and dry wit along with narrative was always an important element for us."

Despite reportedly early starts (Brough's strict routine had the band in the studio from 8:30 in the morning), they were allowed to self-produce their first album. This freedom did not extend, however, to complete creative control. "They let us get on with it, but only up to a point. They wanted new things at that time. But there were things they wanted to change that we weren't happy about." A combination of creative and personality differences, perhaps over Brough's strict regime, coupled with a perceived lack of commitment from Polydor, meant that the lightning relationship with the label was over almost before it began. "When they finally brought the album out we decided not to work with it, so we went on tour to Italy and Switzerland. By that point we didn't click. It was obvious they weren't going to put the time or effort into it so we decided not to."

Building upon their solid live shows, Audience continued to develop a loyal following as they toured and soon they receive an opportunity that would place them back at the heart of Werth's own place of birth in the East End of London.

The band's rapid rise had created the need, early on, for a manager and it was Tony Hodges of Juliana's Discotheques management agency that became their steward. Perhaps seeking to capitalise on the group's East London connections, or the narrative quality of Audience's material, with music, lyrics and instrumentation shifting between styles and modes to tell stories, Hodges secured an agreement from film maker Barney Platts-Mills to have Audience provide the soundtrack for his new film, *Bronco Bullfrog*.

Feature-length and shot in black and white with untrained actors, the film would be feted as a masterpiece. For a band who, despite their inexperience and youth, had already produced an album, the task seems to have been greeted with characteristic ease. Beginning the writing process whilst in Switzerland, the quartet produced a soundtrack that gels perfectly with the action and imagery of the film. Despite their confidence, working to the exacting and unmovable demands of edited and time synced celluloid would prove to be a challenge, as Werth explains. "It was an experience in itself, writing certain length bits of music, writing a couple of main tunes and then doing little pieces that had to fit specific scenes. We sometimes worked from the rushes. They'd need a little bit here and they'd show us a section and they'd say we need a little bit here where they are walking towards a station or whatever, 17 seconds or whatever. We did a lot of that and it was quite hard work actually. All this was at the same studio we did our first album, at Morgan Studios."

With the band at loggerheads with Polydor, the potential for a long period in the creative doldrums was high, but with their live shows drawing attention it was only a matter of time before a new prospect arose. In October that opportunity came as Audience played support to Led Zeppelin at The Lyceum in London. "The night we supported Led Zeppelin was a good night. We went down very well and got some great music press the next week. We had a strong live following."

As Audience played through their set of songs about lazy, love-struck medieval poets and stage-coaches to Waverley, there was an

Williams, Connor, Gemmell and Werth let rip at Reading Festival; Werth and his treasured electric nylon-strung guitar (far left); early Audience performance at Ronnie Scott's jazz club, '69 (left)



admirer watching from the wings. Tony Stratton-Smith, the head of the newly established Charisma Records, had come down with his team from the label to see the band. Legend has it that the band was signed almost overnight, though details of how things were resolved with Polydor are sketchy and contradictory. In some histories the contract with Polydor had lapsed, in others it was merely dormant. Werth's understanding of the situation is that "Charisma had to buy us out of the Polydor contract."

Signing to Charisma was to have a transformative effect on the fortunes of Audience. Werth describes the label as engendering a "spirit of camaraderie between the various bands" with the charismatic figure of Stratton-Smith at its centre. "I remember when Charisma were changing offices and he'd be walking along with all these young followers from his office. He looked like a mother hen with all his chicks around him. He made us feel secure and he had a great sense of humour and he was supportive – up to a point."

Olympic Studios were booked for the recording of the band's next album and, perhaps, to compliment the story-telling subject matter of their material, Shel Talmy, who was known for his associations with The Kinks, was drafted in to produce. "Shel was brought in by Charisma because of Gail Colson, who was really the power behind Strat at Charisma; she used to be Shel Talmy's assistant. So I think it was she that brought him into the picture."

Despite his longstanding association with Colson, the American hitmaker did not feel any need to treat Charisma's latest signing with kid gloves. Turning up at the studios to hear the exhaustively rehearsed new material that the band intended to record, Talmy flatly announced he did not like any of it apart one song, 'Belladonna Moonshine'. In a display of the confidence that had seen them walk out on one record deal Audience told the respected

producer to forget it. "We actually went in the studio with him and he virtually said, 'I don't like any of this material. Let's do some other stuff.' And we thought, 'That's handy, of course we've rehearsed some other stuff' and we said, 'Bye,' and produced it ourselves. We'd done it once so we thought we were experts [laughs]. We were a strong unit and we knew what we wanted to try."

Eclectic and disparate throughout, *Friend's Friend's Friend* is an album whose songs touch on a bewildering variety of subject matters, including the occult and the mystical. This

"We went in the studio with Shel Talmy and he virtually said, I don't like any of this material. Let's do some other stuff. We said, bye, and produced it ourselves"

variety is further reinforced by the smorgasbord of musical styles, which ranges from jaunty pop, to country, to epic and back again. In the can and released in mid-70, the album yielded one single, Shel Talmy's favourite, 'Belladonna Moonshine', for which an appearance on *Top Of The Pops* was required. Despite this feint towards the hit parade the music press regarded the band as being more towards the serious side of things and duly applied the epithets art and progressive rock.

As you would expect from someone with a graphic art background, Werth wanted involvement in the sleeve design for the album. Offering a concept that was intended as a homage to the work of Alan Aldridge, the resultant design was a disappointment to Werth. In an interview with Sid Smith for the album's 2015 reissue liner notes he expressed his exasperation. "It was really just illustrating

the *Friend's Friend's Friends* lyrics." Formless and messy, the execution could not be further away from the work of a graphic artist whose output helped define the look of the late '60s with his work for The Beatles' Apple Corp. Werth would learn from this experience and, in future, would seek to engage more closely with the designers of Audience's album covers.

Unfortunately, despite the resumption of a heavy touring schedule across the UK, the album failed to make the hoped for impact and sales were poor. Given that they'd self-produced their first two albums it's understandable that, both in terms of concept and quality, they are a little rough around the edges. Youthful bravado and arrogance are, after all, no substitute for the steady guiding hand of a skilled and objective producer. Their next album would need more cohesion and polish and Audience knew just the person to bring that. "We wanted to work with Gus Dudgeon after hearing 'Space Oddity' and really liking the sound of it and the whole idea of it. He liked what we were doing and it really worked out."

Under the guidance of Dudgeon, Audience were to produce their best album yet. Assured and professional, the band and their producer "clicked" and formed a bond based on a shared vision. Werth describes their time in the studio as being "relaxed but productive". Having a producer of Dudgeon's reputation also meant that the pressures normally associated with

studio recording where, as Werth puts it, "time is definitely money", were felt less.

"Dudgeon was so successful at the time. We could get away with murder, stuff we couldn't have done by ourselves.

Loads of spending money and stuff." Aside from the practical considerations,

Dudgeon also knew how to coax the best from his artists. "He was good at bringing the best out of us in the studio. If he felt it could be better, he'd

make suggestions and we'd go again. He was good at coaching the best performance

out of you."

The band remained committed to the experimental and eclectic formula found on their first two albums by and their faith in this approach paid dividends. The fuzz bass solo found on the superb 'Jackdaw', and the use of Leslie cabinets to spin new sounds out of Gemmell's sax and Werth's vocals on 'You're Not Smiling', are just two examples of where processes, deployed with skill and assurance, helped elevate the band's material.

Bigger budgets meant that there was also a greater scope for indulgence. Audience had previously found space for instrumentals, usually with a classical angle, and *The House On The Hill* was to be no exception. Keith Gemmell had taken the floor with his Mozart-inspired 'Ebony Variations' on *Friend* and now it was Werth's turn to show off his guitar technique.



Friend's Friend's Friends. L-R: Gemmell, Connor, Werth, tenor saxophonist Bobby Keys, pianist Nick Judd, brass player Jim Price

Called 'Raviole', the piece – its title is a pun on the Spanish word Ole and Ravi Shankar's name – was given the full treatment with string accompaniment by none other than The London Symphony Orchestra.

Aware of how they were developing as a musical unit and the way their material had evolved since they began, Audience revisited a song from their first album. Although an unusual step, Werth's explanation for the decision makes sense, particularly when the two versions are compared side by side. "We revisited the track 'House On The Hill' for the album because the first time we recorded it we'd only been together a few weeks, and of course by the time we got to the third album we'd been on the road a lot. Obviously we'd really embedded that song in a new way and it had actually developed into what it became on the album, *The House On The Hill*."

Once again, Werth sought to exercise creative control over the album's sleeve, developing a '40s crime theme that was completed by the team at Hipgnosis. Due to what was a strong relationship with the people at Powell and Thorgeron's design agency, Werth was able to fine tune and influence the work as it progressed. "I really knew what I wanted with *The House On The Hill* and got that from Hipgnosis. I also designed the lettering on it. They did one shoot and I got them to do it again because what they'd done with the set up with the girl was wrong. So they did it again. I knew them socially so that all helped."

The House On The Hill was released in the spring of '71 and sold well in Europe, generating new followers for the band. With new horizons beckoning, Audience turned their attention to the States, where the album had enjoyed some success. Unfortunately, the pressures of touring were soon to take their

toll. "It was a strange time. We headed for the States and did a week at The Whisky A Go Go and then a tour in early July with Rod Stewart and The Faces around America and Canada. It worked well. We played these huge places and went down really well with the crowds. It was an amazing time. There was some flying between gigs but most of it was on the road in a car driven by our manager. It was at that point we fell out with Keith. He became difficult to be with but things got out of hand. It was all the pressures of touring and driving long distances. We were young, immature."

"We'd had this euphoric experience in America and came back to this little circuit that we'd had before. The whole American thing wasn't taken advantage of"

With the tour finished Audience returned to the UK, where Gemmell immediately left the band.

The impact of Gemmell leaving was not immediately apparent as there was much to do, including finishing the fourth album. Many of Gemmell's parts had been recorded before the trip and these were retained as the process of completing what would become *Lunch* got underway at Trident Studios. New members were brought in to replace Gemmell and enhance the sound. The first musician to join the ranks was the American Bobby Keys, on tenor sax, who was working with The Rolling Stones on *Exile On Main Street* at the time. At Keys' suggestion, Jim Price, the trumpet and

trombone player, was invited to contribute and Nick Judd also came in on piano. The album was, once again, produced by Gus Dudgeon.

Despite their status as a progressive or art-rock band, Werth maintains that Audience were never part of that scene. Citing his longstanding influences, such as Ray Charles, he maintains that it was American music rather than anything British or European that drove the Audience sound. "We lean more to the American, I definitely think that. While we were around at that time, and some of our songs would fit into that prog area – particularly on *Friends* – I never really saw us as being part of that. For the American thing, there was always that R&B and blues underpinning much of what we did, rather than that Euro prog sound. If we'd had a Hammond we'd have been more towards Jimmy Smith than ELP or that lot."

Lunch, released in February '72, bears out his point about the American influences, with a smooth country vibe infusing many of the tracks alongside folksy and transatlantic rock overtones. That's not to say that the masters of pastiche had forgotten how to mix things up, as most of the album moves effortlessly between styles and influences, often within a single song. 'Party Games' is a good example, mixing what Werth describes as a "funny Russian tune" into the song, and accordion and pan pipes all adding to the atmosphere. The American tour also influenced the music, with tracks such as the fast pickin' 'Trombone Gulch', a story of dirty, dusty, road trip craziness, written following a flight over The Grand Canyon. Along with the classic stadium anthem, 'Stand By The Door', with its gospel choir mood, this exemplifies the direction of travel for Audience. A million miles from the bucolic humour of 'The Poet', from



their first album, these tracks point to a rosy, if somewhat mainstream, future on the American circuit.

With the sights and sounds of America still fresh in their minds Werth, Williams and Connor found it difficult to adjust to life back in Blighty. They had strode like gods upon the stages of America's biggest venues and, by comparison, the clubs of England no longer held much glamour. Their success in the States would have been a gift to any management firm, but unfortunately for Audience the good people of Juliana's Discotheque were not well placed to capitalise on it. "Juliana's Discotheques used to put discos into all the posh debs balls so we did a lot of debs parties. They didn't know what they were doing either, to be honest. They managed us right through our time with Charisma but were out of their depth. They didn't know how to make the most of our American successes," despairs Werth. "Having come back from America, the scene in this country had changed. We'd had this euphoric experience in America and came back to this little circuit that we'd had before. The whole American thing wasn't taken advantage of by our management."

Alongside the rather rueful feeling that they had just experienced The Promised Land, only to see it escape their grasp, the impact of Gemmell's departure was also starting to make itself felt. The dynamic of four friends working closely together had been broken. With another European tour planned the remaining members needed to both re-capture the live energy that had, thus far, propelled them along and create a sound on stage that reflected the work done on *Lunch*. To this end they sought to expand the group's line-up. Unfortunately, recruiting session musicians only caused problems. "Although Bobby Keys was willing to come with us I don't think we could afford him. He was working with the Stones at the time. So we got in Nick Judd who'd been working on *Lunch* to tour with us, and a sax player called Pat Charles. It wasn't quite the same. It was no longer working as it used to."



The band embarked on a tour of the same old places it had played

before. After a final gig in Switzerland they turned, in a somewhat beleaguered fashion, homewards. It was a Bank Holiday and their journey back was to be by ferry from Ostend. Tired and with big queues to contend with they suddenly found themselves attracting the attention of the police who marched them off to be searched. Unfortunately, they were detained so long that they missed the last ferry. This final inconvenience appears to have been the last straw. "We'd had enough," sighs Werth. "It wasn't fun anymore."

They played a few more gigs on their return to the UK and then called it a day. Werth, aware of the impending demise of Audience, negotiated himself a new solo deal with Charisma. Tony Stratton-Smith also offered to become his manager, though this decision was, ultimately, to have negative consequences for Werth and his career. "When Audience split Tony put me off getting another manager but he didn't do the job properly himself so, eventually, it all went downhill."


Even with his good friend Gus Dudgeon producing, his first solo effort seems to have been difficult to complete, with Werth no longer a priority for either his label or his manager. "*King Brilliant* took a long time. Gus was working with Elton John and I was shoved in between various other projects." The album, credited to Howard Werth & The Moonbeams would eventually be released by Charisma in '75.

In a strange twist, just as Audience were experiencing the dismay they felt at finding themselves back in England, Jac Holzman, head of Elektra Records, the group's US label, had noticed them and was formulating plans. Following the death of Jim Morrison and the assumed end of The Doors, Elektra needed a replacement. With good fan and media interest and promising sales during and following their US tour, Audience appeared to be perfectly placed to fill the role.

By the time the news of Holzman's interest came through it was already too late for Audience, but Ray Manzarek of The Doors got the idea that Werth might be able to fill Morrison's shoes. "I'd already started on the solo thing and The Doors tried to contact me. Eventually I found out through Gus that they were interested in me. That all came about through Jac Holzman of our US label, Elektra. He'd originally seen Audience as taking over from The Doors but unfortunately we split up as well. And so his thinking was to merge the remaining Doors members with me up front. That was what he had in mind."

The possibility of recruiting Werth as the new front man of The Doors was explored by Ray Manzarek and, although auditions were held for Werth, it progressed no further. Eventually Werth, who moved to LA, would go on to work with Manzarek on various other projects.

The rise of Audience was both spectacular and rapid, but in the end the speed of their ascent was to be their undoing. Each stage of their development appears to have been rushed, with little time or effort given to consolidation and development. Despite this they managed to produce distinctive music that was often superbly innovative and, occasionally, very odd. From the outset it contained properties that linked it to both the quirky, narrative songwriting of English people like Ray Davies and the more epic visions of their contemporaries in progressive rock. In addition to this, through its use of structure and juxtaposition of styles and modes to reflect lyrical content and humour it also prefigures, in some respects, the music Frank Zappa made in the period between '73 and '75, and the arch art-rock moves of those first Roxy Music albums.

Who knows? Had things happened with less haste and more care, we'd be talking about Audience in the same breath as those deities they may inadvertently have influenced. 

All four Audience albums are reissued as expanded editions by Esoteric



The dog's bollocks.
The Faces in 1969. L-R:
Ronnie Wood, Rod Stewart,
Ian McLagan, Ronnie Lane
and Kenney Jones



"After Marriott walked out, me, Mac and Ronnie were lost. It was like losing a member of the family."

EXPECTING TO FLY

*In March 1969, The Small Faces played their last gig. Exactly a year later, the debut album by **THE FACES** was released to little fanfare. In America, its cover still bore The Small Faces' name.*

The intervening 12 months saw the three exhausted, embittered remaining Small Faces given a shot in the arm by the arrival of former Jeff Beck Group members Rod Stewart and Ronnie Wood. The quintet quickly honed their own patented brand of boozy, bluesy rock 'n' soul that, within two years, would make them one of the biggest bands on the planet.

*Now, on the eve of a comprehensive box set retrospective of The Faces' five years together, drummer **KENNEY JONES** talks to **MARK RAISON** about those months of transition and confusion*



he Faces were really boozy, yeah, shit! Brandy and cokes, brandy and ginger, brandy and anything. It had to be Rémy Martin though. We were the Rémy band. Simultaneously we all came up with the idea to put a bar on stage. We'd dress up our roadie in a black suit, white shirt, and he'd be our barman. So when we wanted a drink he'd put it on a tray, towel over his arm, and bring it over. If anyone wanted a sit down during a gig they could go over to the bar and sit there. God knows how we got through a show. We went on slightly merry and came off absolutely fucking rat-arsed."

Today Kenney Jones, owner of the finest drumstool CV in Britain, is sober but looking forward to a quiet pint later. "I like being straight, I like the idea of being straight, but when The Faces came along, forget it. It got to a point where I enjoyed a day off drinking. I was like wow, I'm straight, what a buzz this is." Immaculately dressed in a blue three-piece suit with velvet collar and Italian shoes, his old modness is still in evidence, as *Shindig!* suggests. "It never leaves you," he says. As Kenney finishes signing posters for a new CD box set of Small Faces Decca material he is, with his easy-going Cockney charm, quietly excited about getting together with his Faces pals Rod Stewart and Ronnie Lane for a charity fundraiser. With a Faces box set, *You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything* hitting the shops this month, *Shindig!* is here to quiz him about the transition from the swinging Small Faces to the swaying Faces.

By mid-1968 The Small Faces had long broken from the strict stuffiness of Decca and were settled into the more liberating environment of Immediate Records and provided the label with their masterpiece, *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*. Released in May, the album spent six weeks at #1, although not, as the band had hoped, as a result of shedding their young audience and finding a more fulfilling acceptance of their musical advancement but due, in part, to the success of their knockabout knees-up novelty,

'Lazy Sunday'.

"We were desperate to lose our teenybopper image – desperate," remembers Kenney. "We only did 'Lazy Sunday' for a laugh; the last thing we wanted was for Andrew Oldham and Immediate to release that as a single. It was really commercial, not at all us. So there it was; another nail in our coffin. It drove Steve Marriott nuts – it drove all of us nuts – but he just couldn't take it anymore and he was off."

With tensions increasingly fraught with Marriott on one side and Ronnie Lane, Ian McLagan and Kenney Jones on the other, Marriott, desperate to play with Herd guitarist/singer Peter Frampton in whatever band possible, chucked down his guitar during a New Year's Eve show at Alexandra Palace and announced he was leaving. The Small Faces soldiered on, fulfilling contractual obligations to the gigs they had lined up, until they bowed out in inglorious circumstances at the Springfield Theatre in Jersey on March 8th '69. "Tin Soldier" ended the set before Marriott jumped straight back into the fire by signing his Humble Pie, officially unveiled weeks later, straight to the label from which he'd seen little previous money. For the remaining Small Faces, the future was uncertain.

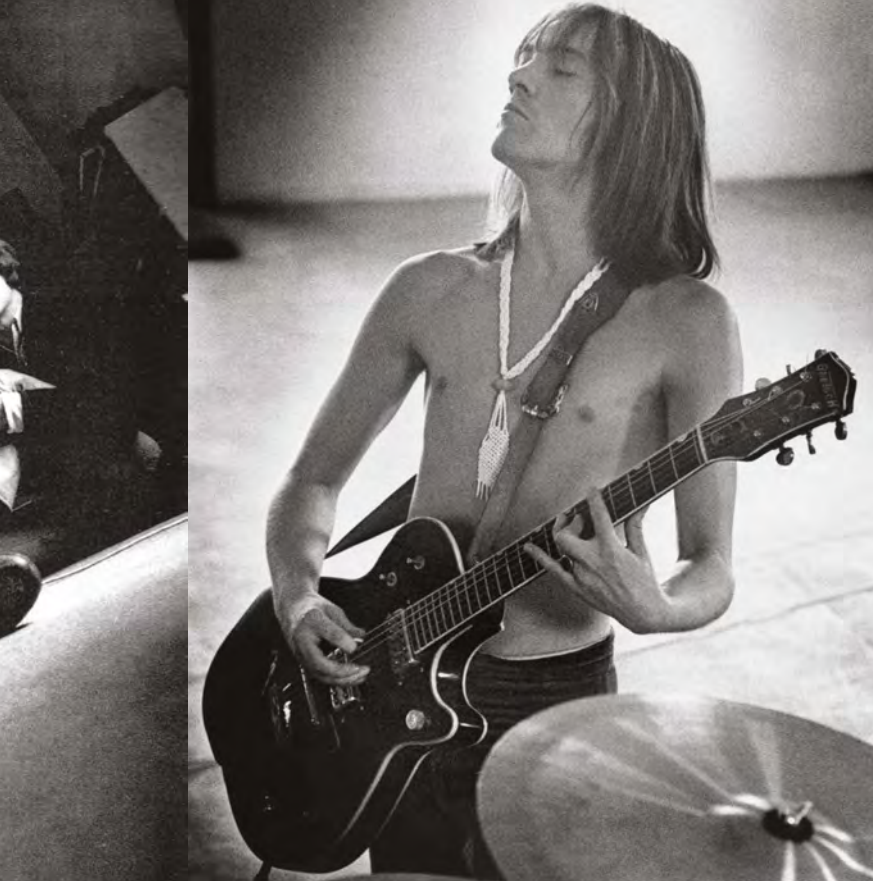
"After Marriott walked out we – me, Mac and Ronnie – were, like, lost. It was like losing a

member of the family. So we just got together once a week in The Rolling Stones' rehearsal space in Bermondsey Street, just to have a jam and so we could be together. Not knowing what we were going to do, where we were going to go, but we enjoyed doing it."

On hearing of the spilt, Ronnie Wood, then on bass duty in The Jeff Beck Group, phoned Lane to express his shock about Marriott's actions. The Small Faces, he said, were his and fellow Beck employee Rod Stewart's favourite group. Wood was invited to jam and was quickly integrated into the loose Bermondsey set-up.

Their paths had only briefly crossed previously but Wood first made an impression on Jones and Lane after the pair had left school and were working in Selmer's music shop in Holborn testing amplifiers. "One day The Birds, with Ronnie, came up there; we were exactly the same age. I remember looking at him like that [mimes big hair and wide-eyed disbelief]. We didn't say boo to a goose to each other."

The Birds, out to the west of London, were a popular live attraction with their soulful yet ballsy R&B attack and strong mod image. Their debut single, 'You're On My Mind', written by Wood, came out in November '64 and, with a television appearance already under their belt, were seen by the fledgling Small Faces as kindred spirits. Mention of The Birds has



What came before. The Jeff Beck Group in '68. L-R: Beck, Wood, Micky Waller, Stewart; The Small Faces the same year. L-R: Steve Marriott, Lane, McLagan, Jones (photo by Gered Mankowitz); Marriott immediately after his departure, '69; the short-lived Quiet Melon. L-R: Jones, Art Wood, Kim Gardner, Stewart, McLagan, Ronnie Wood; early gig poster announcing one of the many confusing transitional Faces bills



“We were desperate to lose our teenybopper image. We only did ‘LAZY SUNDAY’ for a laugh. It drove Steve nuts – it drove all of us nuts – but he just couldn’t take it anymore and he was off”

Kenney follow up with memories of another band cut from the same Prince Of Wales cloth.

“One of the bands I really loved from that time were The Action. I thought they were fucking excellent. They should have been the biggest thing since sliced bread. I kick myself every day and question why they weren’t. Because they were so good, their music was good enough, they were better than most people and they had a great name.”

By '69, The Action were in a similar situation to The Small Faces. Singer Reggie King had left and the remaining members forged on without him. With Reggie then without a band or recording deal it's interesting to speculate how he might have filled the slot vacated by Marriott. *Shindig!* idly suggests Kenney could've asked King to join. “Humph, yeah, that's right, we could have done,” he replies without conviction, humouring our flight of fancy.

But of course Rod Stewart proved to be the perfect choice. “After a couple of weeks Ronnie Wood bought down his mate, which was Rod Stewart. Rod sat there on the amps watching for a few weeks. He loved it.” Like Wood, Rod had paid his dues around the live circuit, and had the mod pedigree after stints with Steampacket, Shotgun Express, The Jeff Beck Group and even deputising on occasion for an absent King in The Action. Woody knew this

when inviting his buddy along but the pair played it cool with Rod watching Lane, McLagan and Wood's half-hearted attempts at singing.

“One thing that was apparent was Steve's powerful voice was not there. We were playing good enough music but the vocals were very polite. I kept thinking, there's a fucking great singer sat over there, so I took the bull by the horns. We'd have a break in the evening and go over to the pub, drank loads and loads of brandy and cokes, shit like that, quite pissed. I took Rod to one side and said, ‘Do you fancy joining the band?’ He said, ‘Yeah, do you think everyone would let me?’ He really did jump at it.”

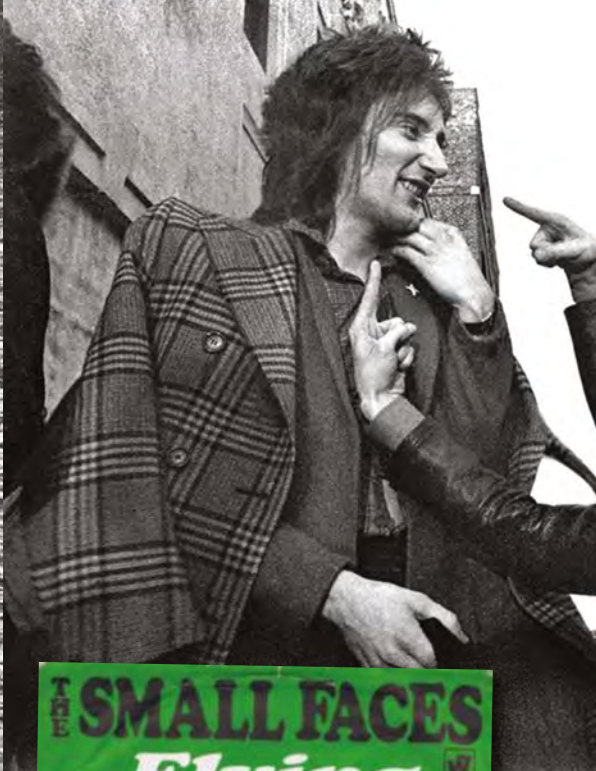
Rod didn't put himself forward? “No, Rod's very careful in the way he approaches things. Rod and Woody's wages in The Jeff Beck Group were £60 each, which was a lot of money in those days, but this was an opportunity to get away from them. That evening, Alvin Lee of Ten Years After was having drinks round at his mews house, so I said to everybody there, ‘Look, I've just asked Rod to join the band’ and all I got was, ‘Oh no, we don't want another prima donna, someone that's gonna walk out on us’. But they were totally different personalities. Steve was like a little big mouth, The Artful Dodger who turned us all into little Artful Dodgers, but Rod was Rod The Mod – he had a

great personality, he was a right piss-taker and he taught us all how to be even more piss-taking.”

With the new band starting to take shape, a couple of extra ingredients found themselves being added to the mix. Woody's brother Art, previously of The Artwoods, and Kim Gardner, formerly of pop-art legends The Creation, began a short-lived association which saw them join forces to stagger out of the Stones' basement and onto the stage.

“We were in there for weeks and Art said, ‘Look we've got to get some gigs’. He got us these gigs but we never had a name because we never for once considered we'd call ourselves The Small Faces, or The Faces, or anything like that. To us it was a completely new entity and that's what we wanted it to be, so a name would come much later. So Art went out and booked us under the name Quiet Melon. A stupid name, but we were stupid anyway. He got the name out of the air. I think he looked at a melon and said, ‘That melon's quiet’. Typical.”

A couple of tracks from this period were finally released in '94. Kenney doesn't recall the songs. “I don't even remember doing it!” They offer a snapshot to those rehearsals and sound like what they are, the formative Faces – easily identifiable – but with Art Wood taking lead vocals with Rod providing backup.



*“We came to a decision that we’d sign the first album as *The Small Faces* – so we’d get the bloody money – and thereafter we’d be known as **THE FACES**. It saved us the bother of trying to find a name”*



Unfortunately for Art, as it was through him that the tracks got recorded, it’s his harsh vocal which distracts from any potential contained in ‘Diamond Joe’ and ‘Engine 4444’. With no takers for the material and after a few low-key gigs, Art and Gardner’s involvement ended, which left the others looking to get started in earnest.

“When it came to doing something more formal, one day we were down The Speakeasy and I bumped into Billy Gaff, who was working for Robert Stigwood at the time. We all still thought we were signed to Immediate Records. So I told Billy and he said, ‘I can get you out of that, no problem’ and sure enough he did. That’s how Billy became our manager; we thought the sun shone out of his arse for that. But what we didn’t know was we were already out of it.”

What Billy Gaff failed to mention was The Small Faces’ contract with Immediate had expired in June ’68, but with nothing more than a gentlemen’s handshake he set about securing a record deal. “Ian Ralfini was taking over as head of Warners UK. He wanted to sign us so we said, great. It was only when it came to signing the contracts we went, ‘Hold on a minute, it says Small Faces – we’re not The Small Faces’. They said if we didn’t have a name like Small Faces nobody knew us, so they’re signing The Small Faces. We went, ‘Nah, no way.’ So we had a big hoo-ha. Eventually they said they’d sign us but we wouldn’t get the

money, which was to be a 30 grand advance. So between us we came to a decision that we’d sign the first album as The Small Faces – so we’d get the bloody money – and thereafter we’d be known as The Faces, as there was nothing small about us anymore. It couldn’t have been better in a sense. It saved us the bother of trying to find a name anyway and I was so pleased to get away from being called Quiet Melon.”

Preceded by the single, ‘Flying’ (“A fucking great track,” says Kenney), and recorded in De Lane Lea Studios in Queensway between August ’69 and January ’70, *First Step* was released in March, its title downplaying expectations. They needn’t have worried as the 10 tracks laid the blueprint which only required fine tuning for the rest of their days: rocking and rolling, bluesy boogieing, folksy reflections and soulful instrumental grooves. The LP closed with a number inspired by The Soul Brothers Six’s minor ’67 hit for Atlantic, ‘Some Kind Of Wonderful’, and crystallized The Faces’ signature sound as that of a rumbustious rhythm and booze house party.

“There’s some nice songs on there,” thinks Kenney. “It’s a very honest album. What you hear on the album is what we had at the time. ‘Devotion’, that’s lovely; ‘Around The Plynth’ was one we used to play a lot on stage; ‘Stone’ was typical Ronnie Lane – ‘Once I was a stone...’ but it’s a fucking great song. With the release of the album it felt like we had a new

lease of life, a breath of fresh air and we realised it wasn’t all over and we had a future. We didn’t really think about any expectations. We knew we had to make an album but we didn’t know what direction we were going in. We were finding ourselves because it was that early. We just were what we were and that’s what people loved about us. Slightly dishevelled but each one of us were fucking great, competent musicians.”

First Step, which spent only one week on the UK chart (#45 with a mullet), included two instrumentals in a Booker T & The MG’s vein, which ramped up the soul quota, such a strong influence running through all The Faces. “That’s right, and there was in The Small Faces but we could never play it on stage because everyone wanted our hits. But when we played together in the studio we were jamming all that stuff. Loved it but then we had to go and do the dinky-dinky-dink. ‘Looking Out The Window’ was really just an instrumental jam but ‘Pineapple And The Monkey’ was more based on a Booker T kind of influence with a bit of ‘Cissy Strut’ by The Meters in there. I loved The Meters.” Kenney proceeds to play *Shindig!* some mean funky air-drums and human beat box which this writer sadly cannot adequately do justice with the written word.

It was the rich blend of soul and blues and The Faces approximation of it – with Rod’s sandpaper rasp, the locked-in rhythm section, the warm organ, and Woody’s country picking

No longer small, the boys goof around for early press photos, '69; the first Faces single, 'Flying', still bore their forebears' name in some territories



and bottleneck slide – which marked them out from the straight blues, heavy-rock, or more progressive bands of the era. They swung. Or, as Kenney puts it, they had feel.

“The Small Faces had real telepathy. No one told me what to play and I didn’t tell them what to play. We just knew. It was almost a similar thing in The Faces but in a more ragged way. Why it worked with The Faces was because of the feel. Just feel. You played with your emotions. That’s what a musician is, that’s why we’re all sensitive people, you know. You can really upset us easily. You play you; you play what you feel. It’s no good if you feel lousy. People say to me it must be great being a drummer, you can take out all your aggression on your drums. Now, if I’m angry I don’t go anywhere near my drum kit. I play my drum kit and I respect my drum kit, I don’t take it out on my drum kit.”

As for the band name, the album was credited to Small Faces in America and, more accurately, Faces in the UK. Not that the identity crisis – which saw them billed throughout '70 as variously Small Faces, Faces, Small Faces With Rod Stewart, Faces Featuring Rod Stewart and, in a forecast of what was to come, Rod Stewart And Small Faces – caused much confusion with few expecting to hear Rod sing ‘Tin Soldier’ or ‘Rollin’ Over’. “The Small Faces didn’t hit it off in America so The Small Faces to them were this [The Faces]. I can’t remember there being any confusion about it over here. People knew straight away it was a new band.”

The album cover, shot by Martin Cook at designer and Ronnie Lane’s fellow Meher Baba devotee Michael McInnerney’s flat in Richmond, graphically displayed the changing times. The days of high-end Carnaby Street fashions, of dressing to adorn posters for teen mags, were behind them as they embraced the prevalent mood and strove to be judged only on the music and not an image. From today’s vantage point

BLIND POWER

CARL TWEED surveys the lead up to ROD STEWART’s pre-Faces debut

Stewart and his musical brother-in-arms, Ron Wood, were riding high in The Jeff Beck Group. Their album *Truth* (credited to Jeff Beck), released in August 1968, had showcased the emerging song-writing talents of Stewart, as well as his instantly recognisable careering blues rasp and, in more restrained moments, a tender yearning to rival his hero Sam Cooke. Jeff Beck’s increasingly irascible behaviour, however, was the downside.

So when Stewart was approached by Mercury Records’ A&R man Lou Reizner about signing to the label, it was a no-brainer. His commitments to The Jeff Beck Group, including four gruelling tours of the States to build on the encouraging record sales for the debut album, would however delay for several months any thoughts of getting into the recording studio.

When The Jeff Beck Group’s album *Beck-Ola* was released in June '69, Wood took this as his cue to leave. Stewart quickly followed suit and headed straight for the studio.

Surrounded by musician friends, including Wood, drummer Micky Waller (who he’d played with in Steampacket and The Jeff Beck Group) and new mate Ian McLagan, the template for his early solo career was immediately established.

The piano-led cover of Mike D’Abo’s ‘Handbags And Gladrag’s’ is the classic everyone knows.

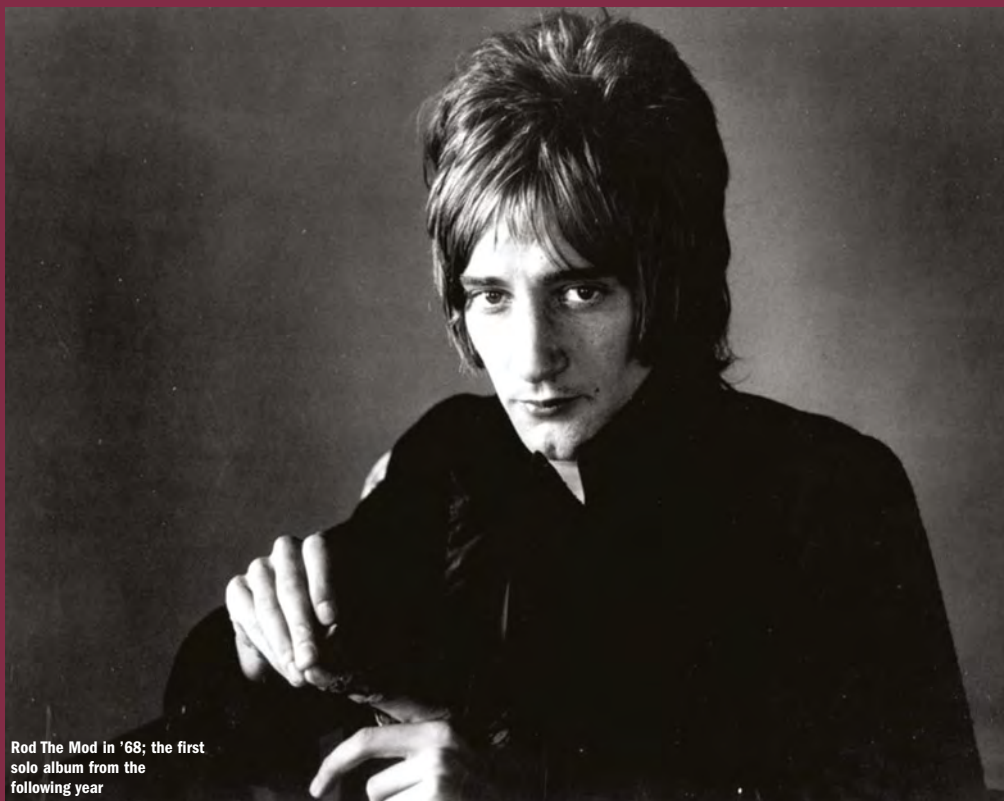
Wood’s Stonesy bottleneck guitar on the Stewart original ‘Blind Power’ impresses. Also interesting are the nods to Stewart’s youthful flirtation with folk music and left-wing politics on Ewan McColl’s ‘Dirty Old Town’ and the American traditional song ‘Man Of Constant Sorrow’.

By the time *An Old Raincoat Won’t Ever Let You Down* was released

in late '69, the booze-fuelled camaraderie of The Faces had already proved impossible to resist. It would mean that we’d get to hear a lot of Rod in the early '70s. Also, sadly, the seeds of The Faces’ eventual destruction had already been sown.



“The template for his early solo career was immediately established”



Rod The Mod in '68; the first solo album from the following year



"Hurry up mate, we want to get back in the pub!"; debut album, *First Step*, credited to Small Faces in the US

*"We didn't know **ROD** had signed to Mercury. He didn't tell us. He only signed it because they gave him an advance and there was enough to buy a Marcos sports car. But then he had to do albums"*

The Faces, in that photograph, look magnificent in an understated way. Sat on the sofa, drunk on homemade punch, their fabulous exaggerated mod hair and couldn't-care-less attitude is still used as a template by bands today albeit with a calculated knowingness rather than a genuine off-the-cuff stance. The honesty of The Faces' music matched here by their garb.

"I remember the picture being taken because none of us knew what to wear because we didn't have an image. The Small Faces became very much about the image. In The Faces image didn't come into it, it was take it or leave it. We just wore what we wanted. We didn't even care about it that much. So we tried to look respectable and Rod was sort of Rod, because in those days he had holes in his shoes, stuff like that. He had cardboard in his

shoes in this picture. And Ronnie Wood, being the arty person, had the book. We didn't know what the album was going to be called. It was only after Ronnie picked up this *First Step*, how-to-play-guitar book, that we called it that."

Whether the state of Rod's dilapidated footwear was symptomatic of the band still waiting to cash their 30 grand advance or of his notorious stinginess, Kenney doesn't say. In fact, Rod was doing okay for himself as he'd already signed a solo deal with Mercury Records (see sidebar) prior to penning The Faces' contract. "We didn't know Rod had signed to Mercury for a solo album," claims Kenney, "he didn't tell us. He only signed it because they gave him an advance and there was enough to buy a Marcos sports car. But then he had to do albums."

Rod's *An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down* – complete with grubby tramp in a dirty mac chasing small children across a field as the choice of cover photograph – beat *First Step* to the shops in the UK and the US (where it was retitled *The Rod Stewart Album* and had its dubious artwork replaced) and was followed later in '70 by *Gasoline Alley*, both featuring contributions from his band mates, as Rod sought to ride two interlocking careers in tandem. In time this proved unmanageable as his solo success went stratospheric, but initially it worked fine.

"Joe Moss at Warners and the head of Mercury Records were close friends, that's how we worked out a deal to maintain it," explains Kenney. "Rod should've been with The Faces but found he had to deliver an album, so he did. So they worked out – Mercury were sly bastards – that they released Rod's records at the same time so we were promoting his album as much as ours. They were pushing him big time. In the end I thought it was quite a good thing, the way it worked. We both benefitted."

The band's schedule now increased as they gigged to promote their record, and Rod's, especially in America. "It was amazing to tour America because we never went there with The Small Faces. We did all these clubs. The first one we played was in Detroit with The MC5. Everyone loved us and by the time we got to

HAD A REAL GOOD TIME

KENNEY JONES fills us in about *The Faces'* public reunion with Rod Stewart

Rock 'n' Horsepower takes place at Hurtwood Park Polo Club and is Prostate Cancer

UK's flagship music event, put on by Kenney Jones and his wife Jayne to raise funds and awareness for the disease. Kenney explains how The Faces reunited to support the event this September.

"Woody and I flew over for Rod's 70th birthday party in LA. He had a very private party – marquee in his garden, very posh, and there was a stage set up. We're all in dinner suits and Rod, Ronnie and I ended up doing a couple of songs – 'Stay With Me' and 'Sweet Little Rock 'n' Roller' or something. And Rod said 'You've just witnessed the reformation of The Faces'. It's nice we're getting back together. We'll see

how far it goes but it's difficult when other people get involved, managers and that.

Prior to that we'd been seriously trying to do something. It became all the more poignant due to the loss of Mac. Echoing around all our minds were we'd better do something quick before one of us pops off. So I said to Rod why don't we do the next Prostate Cancer UK gig, because I'd had prostate cancer and was keen to raise awareness. Get yourself tested. If you have your prostate removed you can kiss goodbye to a hard-on

forever but if you catch it early enough, and with brachytherapy, everything's normal. You fire blanks, that's about it. I've already got six kids, I don't want any more!"



Boston, or the next place, the word of mouth had gotten out, that's how it travelled then. In those days, we'd do a gig, right from day dot, and invite the audience back to the hotel to have a party. And they came. That stayed with us all the time. That's why we became this fun loving party band. The audience got pissed with us and we got pissed with them. And then we played music with each other, like one big family."

That accessibility endeared them all the more to their fans. They were a proper people's band, all sharing the same good times. As their success escalated, so The Faces partying increased as boozing, groupies and rearranging hotels became outlets to relieve on tour boredom, proudly earning a ban from every Holiday Inn in America. "We had more fun really in The Faces than we did in The Small Faces. We could be more rebellious." The more innocent japes would begin on the Atlantic crossing. "You wouldn't want to fall asleep with The Faces on board. You could smoke on the plane in those days, so anyone who fell asleep would have cigarettes on them, butter, custard, anything. Butter was a great one. You'd put it on their head and it would slowly melt and go down their face and then you'd put ash in their hair."

Even during performances nobody was safe.



Survivors. Kenney, Woody and Rod embarked on the latter's first official Faces reunion this month; Kenney sticks up for the Prostrate cause



The much-missed Mac
and his Hammond hands

*“All of a sudden there was **NO ONE THERE**. I played away a bit longer. Where the fuck are they? After about 20 minutes they came back in. They’d been in the pub. I don’t even like drum solos”*

“You never knew what was going to happen with The Faces on stage. I think it was at Kilburn, behind the stage door was a pub, right on the corner. So, I started the drum solo off to ‘(I Know) I’m Losing You’ and I soon realised something was different, I couldn’t see them watching me anymore. All of a sudden there was no one there. I played away a bit longer. Where the fuck are they? After about 20 minutes they came back in. They’d been in the pub. I don’t even like drum solos.”

The Faces spent their days and nights in a near permanent sloshed state in a way that differed from The Small Faces. “I didn’t really drink back then and The Small Faces were more into the drugs, except me, which was why I couldn’t live with them in Westmoreland Terrace in Pimlico. All on speed, and LSD – you fucking name it. I could never do that. The most I’d have would be some uppers maybe, some blues. Moonie got me into those a bit. He’d just pick up handfuls, and I’d go, ‘I’ll just take one.’ I was like a bag of nerves. I could never do cocaine, although I tried it. I’d be playing away like this [mimes huge rush of energy] and then all of a sudden you’d go whoop [deflating noise], it would just leave you, that buzz would just go. And then it’d come back again out of nowhere.

Forget it.”


After the package tours, screaming fans and 20 minute sets The Small Faces endured only a few years earlier, playing to audiences who wanted to listen, and being in a band able to extend themselves came as blessed relief to The Faces.

“The Small Faces always wanted to be known for our musicianship as we were getting better and we wanted to lose the teenybopper image, so with The Faces it was very different, I felt like I was finally being appreciated as a drummer. I think everyone felt a little like that in the band. We were playing more meaningful stuff. We could play lovely blues, stuff like that, and not ‘Lazy Sunday’. That’s what we wanted to be and why Marriott and Humble Pie got the head start on us, got to America before us, but we overtook them and it happened really quickly.”

It certainly did. 1971 was an incredible year for The Faces, far outstripping any expectations. The band released two more albums, *Long Player* and *A Nod’s As Good As A Wink... To A Blind Horse*, plus Rod’s *Every Picture Tells A Story* went to #1 simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic, with the single ‘Maggie May’ inescapable. They were now major league box

office and, until they spilt in ’75 enjoyed all the trappings that brought. “For a while we were more successful than the Stones, believe it or not,” says Kenney.

Shindig! asks Kenney if he wishes to sum up his days with The Faces but it’s clear he has no intention of ringing last orders just yet. “No, not really. I’m still having a good time.”

Chin, chin! 

You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything is out now on CD and LP on Rhino

Many thanks to Kenney Jones, Jayne Jones, Rob Caiger, Pete Flatt, Andy Neill (whose *Faces* book will be published in an updated edition in early 2016) and Jon ‘Mojo’ Mills for additional questions and company



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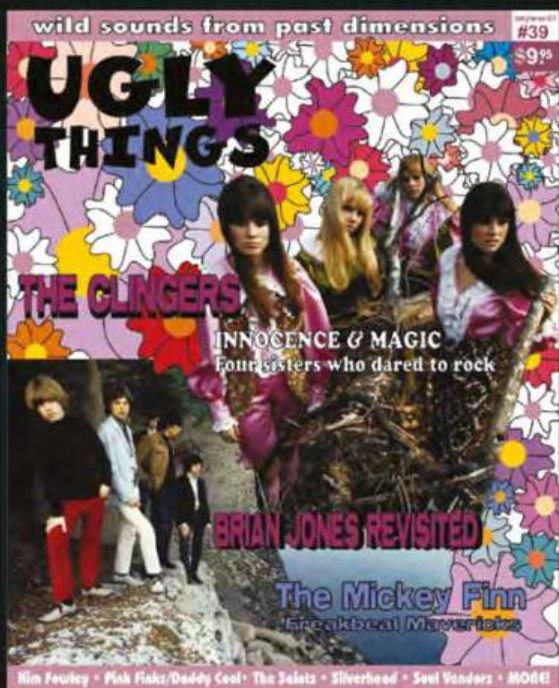
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and many more!*



Collecting The Debris

KRIS NEEDS wonders if this new anthology offers any fresh glimpses into the great early '70s English rock band

THE FACES

You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything

★★★★★

Rhino 5-CD/LP box set

It now seems almost unbelievable that The Faces can carry such a huge and beloved legend from a peak creative period which spanned just a couple of short years. Their four studio albums, finally corralled together after years of catalogue-milking compilations, can best be summed up as a solid warm-up followed by two peaks then a patchy swansong. But, on their night, The Faces could be the best band in Britain and, as the highlights of this consummate package show, one of the best this country's ever produced, which makes their demise due to Rod Stewart's exploding solo career all the more frustrating and Woody's departure to the Stones more understandable.

After the band was formed in 1969 by these two refugees from Jeff Beck's group and Small Faces, Ronnie Lane, Ian McLagan and Kenney Jones (who Steve Marriott had abandoned in favour of the lumpen Humble Pie), their aptly-titled *First Step* debut was a tad premature, although the rollicking 'Three Button Hand Me Down', raucous 'Shake Shiver Shudder' and sublime blues

ballad 'Devotion' showed much raw promise.

Then came the glory stretch of landmark gigs and February '71's *Long Player*. I was lucky enough to catch The Faces on several occasions during their most magical year, including the breakthrough London gig at The Roundhouse (a quid to get in!), Watford Town Hall (where I watched them ejaculate their unique brand of magic from a prime spot behind Woody's bottle-stacked amps) and almost blowing The Who offstage at The Oval. Of course these were the riotous, scarf-waving celebrations of legend, coming at just the right time in a musical landscape dulled by indulgence and simpering singer-songwriters, with only Mott The Hoople supplying any form of street level rampancy. But The Faces also boasted a rare kind of internal combustion which could cook up a scorching groove and fry it in Memphis

soul sauce while sounding like they had just been thrown out of the pub as Woody's teetering, scything guitar and the late, great Mac's barrelhouse piano and swirling Hammond spilled and soared in perfect synchronisation over the loose, dynamic tension of Lane's bass and Jones' drums. Throw in the finest white soul cheeky chappie doing the rounds before he went sailing to success and you had the kind of once-in-a-lifetime band that hit the heights but unfortunately couldn't last long.

Long Player's respective side openers – 'Had Me A Real Good Time' and 'Bad 'n' Ruin' – stand as the ultimate declarations of The Faces' sizzling sozzled intent. 'Tell Everyone' and 'Sweet Lady Mary' showed their often overlooked delicate way with a ballad, while 'Maybe I'm Amazed' was a cracking live version of one of the last songs Paul McCartney had written while in The Beatles. Its studio incarnation,

which was released a single, is one of the extras, which mainly comprise BBC sessions and pissed-up rehearsals. Those extras include the phenomenal version of Robert Johnson's 'Love In Vain' that they were playing at shows, as then-recently recorded by the Stones. That was a bit cheeky, maybe suggesting that here was a band to whip their crown, which didn't seem that far-fetched at one point.

The Faces continued the momentum with November's *A Nod Is As Good As A Wink... To A Blind Horse*; obviously thrown down in sporadic bursts between hectic gig schedules but boasting their quintessential knockabout anthem 'Stay With Me'. By the following year The Faces were huge but Rod was huger, inter-band discontent precipitating the departure of Ronnie Lane after '73's comparatively flimsy *Ooh La La*. The Faces' days were numbered but they still went out with a great single in 'You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything', which boasted one of their most sublime ballads on its flip in 'As Long As You Tell Him'.

Then they were gone. Although these albums are readily available, and some of the extras have appeared before too, it's good to have them all in one place; warts, flatulence and all.

“The Faces also boasted a rare kind of internal combustion which could cook up a scorching groove and fry it in Memphis soul sauce while sounding like they had just been thrown out of the pub”



JOHN BAKER The Vendetta Tapes

★★★★★

Buried Treasure CD/LP



Following recent vinyl reissues of all the major Radiophonic releases, it at one point seemed like

the well might have at last run dry. However since then, with the revitalised Workshop on tour and the promise of a new album still looming, things have been looking up for lovers of Mills, Kingsland, Howell *et al's* brand of quirky, jazzy electronic *musique concrète*.

The archive cupboard has turned out to be far from bare too. This collection of tracks produced by Baker for the now mostly-lost late '60s BBC TV thriller, *Vendetta*, is a fascinating fusion of his percussive, choppy sound palette, superb melodic jazz sensibilities, and the prevailing swaggering post-Bond soundtrack feel of the era (John Barry produced *Vendetta's* iconic theme music). The combination works brilliantly.

Completists take note: the CD version has 10 more tracks than the LP. A shame for vinyl lovers – this would have made a nice double album.

Christopher Budd

BLOOMFIELD KOOPER STILLS

Supersession 5.1

★★★★★

BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS

Child Is Father To The Man

★★★★★

Both Audio Fidelity 5.1 SACDs



For a brief moment, multi-channel sound appeared to be the future of audio, but due to

a confusion of formats it never caught on. In 2004, just as Al Kooper completed 5.1 mixes of two classic albums, the majors ditched the surround concept. Over 10 years later those mixes have finally been released with fascinating liner notes by Kooper.

These are the first psychedelic albums of the '60s to receive the surround sound treatment and it surpasses all expectations. Kooper has done an amazing job taking the sound, expanding it and sending the psychedelic effects right around the room in a way that could only have been dreamt of in 1968.

It's hard to choose the best moment but the phased 'You Don't Love Me' on *Supersession* is now in mind-blowing 3D, the Moog and guitar solos on 'His Holy Modal Majesty' are physically alive and *Child Is Father...* now resembles an album you've never heard before. Who needs drugs? Incredible.

Richard Allen

BRUCE AND VLADY The Reality

★★★★★

Vampisoul CD



Sporting the calibre of sleeve artwork usually encountered in charity shop digging raids, *The Reality's* album

cover belies the true intensity of the sounds lurking inside. For the record, Bruce was Bruce Powell an American Hammond B-3 player and Vlady was Wladyslaw Jagiello, a Polish jazz drummer who crossed first paths in a Stockholm rock club and decided to pool their talents there and then. You can do a lot with a Hammond B-3 and a drum kit and *The Reality* bears spectacular witness to this as Bruce and Vlady head off on a series of trippy groove explorations illuminated *en route* by Bruce's wigged-out hipster vocal observations on the nature of "reality".

Originally released in 1970 on the Svensk American label (which folded shortly after), vibe-wise this remarkable "lost" Swedish jazz album oscillates between a full-on psychedelic freakout and the very happening score from

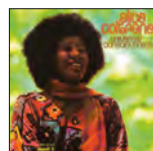
some long forgotten slice of cinematic exotica.

Grahame Bent

ALICE COLTRANE Universal Consciousness

★★★★★

Superior Viaduct LP



Regarded by many as the purest distillation of the sound and musical ideals of the great Alice Coltrane,

Universal Consciousness (1971) finds the pianist/harpist accompanied by an extraordinary congregation of musicians which includes bassist Jimmy Garrison, the triple drummer battery of Jack De Johnette, Rashid Ali and Clifford Jones, tamboura player Tulsī and a string section that adds a shimmering celestial dimension to the sound.

While the resulting audio tapestry fuses aspects of free and spiritual jazz with Indian musical forms, forging them into a dazzling hybrid which, on occasion, veers towards what might be considered the orchestral *avant-garde* this is nevertheless still jazz but jazz as few have ever had the requisite mind set and the chops to perform it. Setting

aside any facile attempts at tidy categorisation, at its simplest the five compositions that together make up the album are nothing more, nothing less than musical representations of mankind's continued quest for enlightenment.

Grahame Bent

BONNIE DOBSON Dear Companion

★★★★★

Big Beat CD

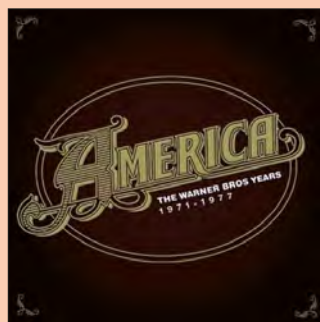


Bonnie Dobson is probably best known to *Shindig!* readers as the author of the much-covered 'Morning

Dew', but this timely reissue of her second album, from 1960, once again proves that there is much more to her talents than one great song.

Made up almost entirely of traditional material, there's an unusually cosmopolitan outlook to her choice of songs, pulling in tunes from France and Eastern Europe as well as English-speaking countries. She made a point of

Too Soft To Rock



AMERICA The Warner Bros Years 1971-1977

★★★★★

Warner Brothers 8-CD box set

America were a trio of ex-pat Americans in London who formed their own

teenage version of Crosby, Stills & Nash then slowly morphed into a schmaltzy MOR juggernaut – so the prospect of wading through eight CDs of their music filled me some trepidation.

Perhaps it wouldn't be so bad. This is after still the band who struck gold with the Neil Young-wannabe 'A Horse With No Name', the winning 'Ventura Highway' (which sounds particularly good whilst driving a convertible down the 101), and the George Harrison-aping 'Sister Golden Hair' (the best song Big Star never wrote and one of the great pop songs of the era). I mean, for every saccharine 'Muskrat Love' and horrible cod-reggae 'Woman Tonight' there'd be a far out 'Sandman', right?

Well no, not really.

Albums one and two are actually

rather good, 1971's fine self-titled debut awash with a hazy hashish '60s hangover and follow-up, *Homecoming*, a folk-rock disc in thrall to *Déjà Vu* but with enough of its own homespun charm. Album number three, *Hat Trick*, is just awful, however, a soft-rock monstrosity lacking both spine and groove. The next few albums saw the band hooking up with George Martin, and the fifth Beatle ensured that not every album would be a complete washout – thanks in large part to his sonic skills, they all have at least one or two decent tracks, ('Sister Golden Hair' an obvious standout), but ultimately the band's output is a triumph of production and virtuosity over songwriting.

Tom Patterson



Dan Peek, Gerry Beckley and Dewey Bunnell. All-American



Carole King in the comfort of the studio

Queen Of The Canyon

THE CITY Now That Everything's Been Said

★★★★★

Light In The Attic CD/LP



Some time back Light In The Attic head honcho Matt Sullivan placed The City's lone 1968 album at the head of his "dream reissue" list, while quietly acknowledging that such a dream may be an impossible one due to contractual issues. Still, why be "a man without a dream"? Now, we can luxuriate in the reflected glory of LITA's triumph with their long awaited edition of said album.

But why would what is effectively a half-forgotten Carole King anomaly have floated to the top of such a taste maker's bucket list in the first place?

When Carole King left New York for LA's Laurel Canyon in 1967, she was in a dark place. Her marriage to childhood sweetheart and songwriter partner Gerry Goffin was on the rocks and she was a mother of two. That

didn't stop her inadvertently lighting the touch paper under the singer-songwriter explosion that followed, of course, but that was still a couple of years away when she cut this low-key, often ragged collection of songs at the behest of fellow émigrés and future band members, guitarist Danny Kortchmar and bassist Charles Larkey (King's then-squeeze following her split from Goffin). Egged on by producer Lou Adler, who signed the trio to his Ode label (despite wanting King as a solo artist), King's reticence to perform, even in front of her collaborators, was slowly eroded and she began sharing her latest creations, enlisting new writing partners in David Palmer and, more significantly, Toni Stern.

The dozen songs that make up The City album inhabit a time between the "outsider pop" of 'Wasn't It You?', 'Take A Giant Step' and 'Pleasant Valley Sunday' and the ebullient, FM-friendly tones of first *Writer*, and then *Tapestry*. 'Wasn't Born To Follow' had already been covered by The Byrds; 'Snow Queen', 'Now That Everything's Been Said', 'Paradise Alley' and 'That Old Sweet Roll (Hi-De-Ho)' would also find their mark in the hands of other artists. But, sadly for us, this fleeting experiment in "Carole King as non-starring band member" was unsustainable, otherwise we might be listening to the singer's own take on 'The Porpoise Song' today. And what could be better than that?

Andy Morten

learning these songs directly from oral sources and manuscripts, which gives them a strong sense of immediacy and verisimilitude. The arrangements are sparse, and her voice shifts seamlessly between pure, glacial beauty and warm sensuality. On the *a capella* 'Ben's Lullaby', her singing is almost painfully beautiful; rich, resonant, and touchingly sweet. 'The Cruel Mother', learned from Shirley Collins, is a chilling tale of infanticide, sensitively rendered. A mesmerising and gorgeous record.

Neil Hussey

DR JOHN The Atco/Atlantic Singles 1968-74

★★★★★

Omnivore CD



The artist known as Dr John has done plenty of memorable work both before and after the time period contained on

this collection, but the vast majority of his top career highlights as a solo artist are captured here. The A and B-sides presented in the compilation work together to create a supernatural embarrassment of musical riches.

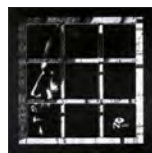
Mystical, funky, soulful, dangerous, streetwise and swampy, they reveal Dr John to be a kind of voodoo ringleader with a seemingly limitless array of groove-laden talents. He can be spooky on a gem like 'I Walk On Gilded Splinters', then turn around and come off as good-timey on the irresistible 'Such A Night', as bayou witch doctor on 'Gris Gris Gumbo Ya Ya' then turn dance floor-filling funkster on 'Right Place, Wrong Time'. Throughout the varied tracks, the one constant (besides the consistent high quality) is the shamanistic character of the indomitable Dr John.

Brian Greene

THE EDGE OF DAYBREAK Eyes Of Love

★★★★★

Numero Group CD/LP



Numero's knack for unearthing pure soul gold from unlikely sources hits new heights with this sparkling set

recorded by inmates at Richmond, Virginia's State Farm penitentiary in 1979. Recorded over five strict hours under the cold gaze of armed guards, the eight tracks present an enthralling, often moving update on the field recording concept, which had to be pulled off in first takes.

The musicians, who were serving between six to 60 years, rose to the occasion, unfurling sweet soul harmony ballads, up-tempo funk workouts and EWF-style optimism with remarkable ability, telepathy and polish. The project was financed by a local record store owner, who booked the mobile studio then sold the album's 1,000 pressing

until it was lost in a flood. Ironically, the album earned the musicians parole, which split the band, making this unique one-off blast from the darker side of US African-American history a truly priceless document.

Kris Needs

THE ELECTRIC FLAG Old Glory: The Best Of

★★★★★

Retro World CD



Usually the deal with any *Best Of* collection is that it pulls together the strongest material from across an

artist's discography. In the case of Old Glory, the vast majority of the tracks are drawn from The Electric Flag's all-defining debut album from 1967, *A Long Time Coming* (including alternative versions of tracks from the same) with the balance of material coming in the form of four titles from the band's second outing, *The Electric Flag: An American Band*, previously unreleased demos and live recordings from their appearance at Monterey Pop, which just happened to be the band's first ever gig. Considering that Mike Bloomfield, the initial driving force behind The Electric Flag, quit after the release of the debut album, in terms of presenting the strongest possible collection of material on one disc, this atypical approach to selecting material actually makes some sort of sense.

Grahame Bent

GEORGIE FAME Georgie Does His Thing With Strings / The CBS As & Bs

★★★★★

BGO 2-CD



Few artists threw caution to the wind like the former Clive Powell did during his late '60s / early '70s solo tenure

with CBS. While his mastery of tough, Booker T / Jimmy Smith-indebted soul and R&B continued to find an occasional home on B-sides (see 'Beware Of The Dog'), his singles became increasingly commercial, often hokey stabs at chart success ('The Ballad Of Bonnie And Clyde'), occasionally giving way to effortless, sublime creations like 'Peaceful' and four-to-the-floor funk-rockers like 'Somebody Stole My Thunder'.

This run of 45s - from '67's 'Because I Love You' to a piano-led take on James Taylor's 'Fire And Rain' three years later - is collected on this set's extremely satisfying second disc, while the first finds Fame in full-on MOR / easy mode on a selection of pop and jazz standards with no sign of his trademark Hammond attack in evidence. The '67 *Knock On Wood* EP bridges the two worlds and provides some much much-needed respite.

Andy Morten

GOLDBERG

Misty Flats

★★★★★

Future Days CD/LP



This mystifying album was recorded to two-track in 1974 for Michael Yonkers' label with only 500 copies issued.

Stripped back and bare, it fits the folk bill, but the songs also pay tribute to Goldberg's earlier life in powerpop band The Batch, format and structure rather than sound, and a punkishness inspired by Lennon's Plastic Ono Band.

Like other similarly now respected albums it's crude, innocent and retrospective; not surprising when considering Goldberg was 23 at the time. Alex Chilton and Neil Young are the easiest reference points for his wavering voice and plaintive lyrics, but this is a cohesive "loner folk" album all of its own making that sits easily alongside the mentioned artists, and sounds at times like a basement version of John Phillips' *Wolf King Of LA* pointing the way for the purposefully mournful and low key artists of today. An understated gem.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

THE GUESS WHO

The Best Of The Guess Who

★★★★★

Audio Fidelity 5.1 SACD Quad



With a wealth of quadrophonic mixes made in the '70s it makes perfect sense to release them

through the wonder of 5.1 surround sound. Taking up four of the 5.1 channels the original quad mix can now easily be heard and fairly inexpensively if that's your bag. When the majors had any interest they concentrated on the usual mainstream stuff so it's gratifying to see speciality labels now filling demand.

This comp of one of the great Canadian '60s bands is a delight. 'Laughing', 'American Woman' and 'Share The Land' now sound huge and truly three dimensional, filling the room with a completely new perspective. When you switch back to stereo it's like dropping to mono.

Although quad isn't as exciting as a true dedicated 5.1, the idea of obtaining Beaver & Krause's *Gandharva* and Jefferson Airplane's *Volunteers* in quad 5.1 is truly ear-watering. More please.

Richard Allen

JOHN HULBURT

Opus III

★★★★★

Tompkins Square CD



Tompkins Square have long been outdoing themselves in resuscitating obscure, long-lost recordings from a bygone age but this latest missive, co-curved by the label's Ryley Walker, is up there with the label's greatest achievements. John Hulburt came up in Chicago garage band The Knaves but took on a deeper mission after he became enthralled by

the stellar outpourings of steel-string pioneer John Fahey, who also started his career with a lovingly self-pressed album.

The spellbinding instrumentals which Hulburt crammed into his sole 1972 album ripple and glower with dazzling dexterity and, on tracks such as 'Sunset', 'All Night Waitress' and 'Clark St.', shimmer with the kind of other-worldly arcane luminescence which graced Fahey's seminal works, along with that indefinable but crucial sense of wonder and mischief.

Hulburt ended up living in Paris until his death in 2012. We should be glad to know about him. A proper mind-blowing revelation for Fahey-ites.

Kris Needs

THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND

Wee Tam And The Big Huge

★★★★★

BGO 2-CD



After the high watermark established by their two previous releases this, The ISB's most ambitious project to date (1968), found core duo Robin Williamson and Mike Heron in increasingly spiritual mood.

The more expansive and esoteric numbers ('Job's Tears', 'Ducks On A Pond', 'The Son Of Noah's Brother') come courtesy of Williamson, although Heron - vocally the stronger of the pair but usually more lightweight in terms of composition - hardly disappoints

IRON

with the Appalachian romp-along 'Log Cabin Home In The Sky' and the country-tinged hymnal, 'Greatest Friend'.

ISB would limp on until '74, by which time their stock would be greatly diminished but for now they were still on top of their game. Being a double album there are moments where you feel compelled to go out and put the kettle on. As a single disc it could have been a classic of its rather singular genre.

Ian Fraser

IRON BUTTERFLY

Ball / Metamorphosis

★★★★★

BGO 2-CD



Formed in San Diego in the mid-60s Iron Butterfly attained huge commercial success and lasting fame with 1968's 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida'. These subsequent and often overlooked releases receive their long-awaited dusting off as part of BGO's twofor series of retrospectives.

1969's *Ball* veers between heavier proto-prog workouts ('In The Time Of Our Lives') and soulful lounge-bar schmooze blues ('Lonely Bar') while 'It Must Be Love' makes you wonder how early Jethro Tull might have sounded had they been American. It's definitely a patchwork quilt, both quality-wise and in terms of categorisation. The following

Solid Soul Sensations

THE FANTASTIC FOUR

The Lost Motown Album

★★★★★

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Ian Levine's Solid Stax

Sensations

★★★★★

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Doré LA Soul Sides 2

★★★★★

All Kent CDs



Berry Gordy acquired The Fantastic Four from the Ric-Tic label, but their tenure at Motown yielded surprisingly little in

the way of success. Led by portly lead singer "Sweet" James Epps, their cancelled Motown album, *How Sweet He Is*, remained unreleased, until now. *The Lost Motown Album* rights that wrong with 13 bonus tracks, many previously unissued. Epps ragged and passionate lead vocal is the main vehicle for these deep, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes heartening recitals. The grown-up lyrics and gorgeous sweeping arrangements were probably deemed too deep for a pop savvy, hook hungry audience to fully appreciate back in the day, but there's Motown magic to be found in these perfectly crafted grooves.

Next up is a revealing look at what lurks in the cupboard of an ardent Stax collector. *Ian Levine's Solid Stax Sensations* is one of the best Stax releases I've heard in a long time. There's hardly a duff track on here and most of it is relatively rare or under-appreciated. Take Margie Joseph's intoxicating 'One More Chance', one of the better known tracks here, but representative of a sound that still has

the capacity to astound. You can add obscure names like Bobby Whitlock, Ilana, Colette Kelly and Roz Ryan to a heady mix of funky, creamy and spine-tingling sanctified soul. Oh yes.

On an even scarcer note, *Doré LA Soul Sides 2* contains varying styles from across the years. The Vows' heavenly doo-wop inspired 'I Wanna Chance' is the earliest track from 1962; Gail Anderson's 'Just A Little Ugly' from '81 is iffy '80s sister soul. Better is The Entertainers IV's 'Getting Back Into Circulation', an exquisite northern soul

floaters. Similarly, The Swans' 'Nitty Gritty City' and The Superbs' 'Goddess Of Love' would keep a northern party in full swing. Intriguingly, slightly leftfield twists can be heard in The Fidels' pounding 'I'm Givin' You Notice Baby', The Superbs' funky, flute assisted 'Wind In My Sails' and the quirky 'Funky With My Stuff' by The Natural Resources. More eclectic still is the 'Louie Louie' stomp of Smoky & The Bears and the discofied *Shaft*-like workout by Willie & The Euphonics.

Paul Ritchie



Margie Joseph's last chance



Deadbeats. Garcia and co in '66

The Trip That Never Ends



GRATEFUL DEAD 30 Trips Around The Sun: The Definitive Live Story 1965-1995

★★★★★

Rhino 4-CD

How times change. When I first began listening to the Dead some 35 years ago, they were musical pariahs on the late '70s/early '80s music scene, universally mocked and derided by sputum-drenched punks and mascaraed Bowie wannabees. Now, in the wake of their 50th birthday farewell shows, and a slew of cover features in the glossy music monthlies – including this esteemed organ – the Dead are in serious danger of becoming hip. Throughout their long strange trip, they've remained resolutely in tune with their founding musical principles, drawing deep from the well of Great American Music (in all its forms), and suffusing it with the spirit of freedom, experimentation and deep, deep joy.

If further proof were needed, check out this monster – a comprehensive overview of the band's live career,

available in two formats: for the completist, there's an 80-disc (!) set, featuring 30 unreleased live shows. That's one from each year from 1965-95, complete with a 7" single, a 288-page book and, erm, a scroll. Then for the mere mortals, there's this four-disc overview, which is more than adequate.

As you'd expect, the set is loaded with sweet jams from all eras. Personal favourites including a lovely, shape-shifting 'Uncle John's Band' from '74, and a deep, soulful 'Estimated Prophet' from '78 – but the early stuff is particularly fascinating, revealing the Dead as a white-hot, paint-stripping R&B band; prime dance floor groovers peddling a deliciously lysergic stew of amp-shredding blues and soul sounds. The totemic 'Dark Star' from '68 is as allusive (and elusive) as you'd imagine, spreading its cosmic mysteries into areas which still remain largely unexplored, even by the most adventurous bands, a hinterland where rock, jazz and psychedelia meet in a singularly creative cosmic union.

There's a consensus amongst certain Deadheads that the band lost something after their '75 hiatus: a damping of their collective fire perhaps, a less exploratory approach to live performance, and while there's some truth in that, they were still formidable on a good night.

Love them or hate them, the Dead were a one-off; true, old-school mould-breakers, and this is a fine celebration of their legacy.

Neil Hussey

year's *Metamorphosis* is more consistent and polished yet less intriguing. 'Butterfly Bleu' provides the over-stretched 14-minute highlight but although the rest of the album may be hard to fault it's just as hard to love as all but a glimmer of experimentation is buried under slabs of blues-rock.

Not disposable by any means but hardly indispensable either.

Ian Fraser

LONNIE LISTON SMITH & THE COSMIC ECHOES Visions Of A New World

★★★★★

BGP CD



Prior to fronting The Cosmic Echoes, Lonnie Liston Smith was already a much in-demand keyboardist, having

previously been a key component in the bands of Roland Kirk, Pharoah Sanders, Leon Thomas and Gato Barbieri, not to mention a brief sojourn with Miles Davis during the early '70s.

Released as his fourth album on Bob Thiele's Flying Dutchman label in 1975, *Visions Of A New World*'s uplifting vibes of peace and positivity are the sound of Lonnie Liston Smith at his commercial peak, refining the spacey blends of jazz and soul previously unveiled to great effect on *Astral Travelling* ('73), *Cosmic Funk* ('74) and *Expansions* ('75) and marrying them to a funk undercarriage. With his brother Donald featured on vocals, such is the stylistic and thematic unity evident throughout the album that everything flows with all the fluidity of a near-perfect song and instrumental cycle.

Grahame Bent

RICHARD MARKS Never Satisfied

★★★★★

Now-Again CD



This anthology of seriously rare recordings documents the entire recorded output of Richard

Marks, an all but forgotten southern soul man from the heyday of the Atlanta soul scene of the late '60s and the early to mid-70s. All 21 tracks showcased here were originally released between 1968 and '76 on a string of 45s issued on a series of small local labels including Tuska, Shout, Note, RSC and Free Spirit, and are only now being reissued for the first time.

A much sought-after artist among hard core soul and funk collectors, Marks never released an album during his lifetime, making this lovingly assembled CD the sole anthology of his material currently in print. Besides the anthology, which includes two previously unreleased tracks discovered on the original tape reels in

Marks' home, the album comes with a 52-page book which details Marks' career complete with full recording credits, label scans, lyric sheets and previously unseen photos.

Grahame Bent

MOTHER NATURE Orange Days And Purple Nights

★★★★★

Tenth Planet CD



Buckinghamshire quartet Sleepy Rojo (later Mother Nature) not only managed to upset

Mickey Most and make two wonderful progressive folk-pop singles but also recorded a bunch of similarly digestible demos and unreleased recordings between 1968 and '72.

By far the best moment is 'Orange Days And Purple Nights' – prime *Fading Yellow*-grade orchestrated bliss. The lush orchestral arrangement – reportedly by Paul Buckmaster – in combination with the delicate West Cost influenced harmonies and folksy electric guitar work results in a sound musically not dissimilar from Marmalade's 'Reflections Of My Life' but with more kudos. Equally enchanting follow-up, 'Once There Was A Time', maintains the quality but, as is often the way with this kind of archival project, the material starts to spread thin when filling an entire CD. Nevertheless, it remains worthwhile.

Richard Allen

TOM RUSH Tom Rush / Take A Little Walk With Me

★★★★★

BGO CD



Rush's first Elektra album (his fourth overall) is mostly traditional tunes that continue to show Dylan and

Leadbelly influences with lots of harmonica (courtesy John Sebastian) and (acoustic) slide accompaniment. It's a relaxing mix of folk (including two Woody Guthrie covers) and blues ('If Your Man Gets Busted', 'Milk Cow Blues', 'Black Mountain Blues') that's not much different from his first three albums. Highlights include an eerie solo take on 'Poor Man' and the good-timey 'Solid Gone'.

The '66 follow-up marked his venture into folk-rock, with Dylan's electric sidemen (Al Kooper, Harvey Brooks et al) featured on the electric Side One, comprised of fun-but-inconsequential rave-ups of Berry, Holly, Diddley and Dixon. The acoustic Side Two is more memorable, featuring two of his best-loved recordings in 'Joshua Gone Barbados' and a rare original composition, the gospel-inflected 'Galveston Flood'.

Jeff Penczak

SABATTIS

Warning In The Sky

★★★★★

Out-sider LP



The band name and album title might hint at some sort of proto-doom act, but Rochester, New York's Sabattis

were very much in the vein of Grand Funk Railroad or Iron Butterfly. Originally recorded in 1970, these recordings were first released on CD in 2011 and this is their debut appearance on vinyl.

Powered by swirling Hammond and tough lead guitar parts, the material works best on ballsy rockers like 'The Devil's In You' and lead-off track, 'Everyday Is Cool', which sports a memorable riff and solo. The long ballad, 'Conversation With Billy', also succeeds with its unnerving atmosphere and lyrics.

Elsewhere, tracks like 'Crystal Mirror' never really leave first gear and drift by pleasurably, though unmemorably.

The album is generally well-mannered when you wish it were wilder, but this is still a decent slab of early heavy-rock and of interest to genre fans.

The accompanying liner notes and images are illuminative of the band's short history.

Austin Matthews

BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE

Many A Mile

★★★★★

Ace CD



In honour of its 50th anniversary, Buffy's sophomore effort finally gets the digital treatment. Unlike

her legendary debut, most of the tracks are traditional or cover versions, although one of her greatest love songs, 'Until It's Time For You To Go', anchors the set.

Her trademark quivering vocals imbue the love songs with an extra layer of emotion that a "prettier" voice might disguise, while her political stances ('Los Pescadores', 'Welcome Welcome Emigrante') mirror Joan Baez's contemporary passion to champion underdogs and outcasts.

'Groundhog' and 'Come All Ye Fair And Tender Ladies' demonstrate her Jew's harp prowess prominent on the early albums, 'Piney Wood Hills' is much more effective in its original, folkier traveling vagabond rendition, and Patrick Sky's title track continues the strolling minstrel theme.

Her song choices seem more personal than economically driven which, while commendable, are, sadly, quite forgettable, although the a capella 'Lazarus' sends shivers up the spine.

Jeff Penczak

LABI SIFFRE

Labi Siffre

Crying Laughing Loving Lying

The Singer And The Song

For The Children

All ★★★★★

All Edsel CDs



Perhaps more famous, in the UK at least, for Madness covering his 1971 hit, 'It Must Be Love', and

various samples being pinched by everyone from Eminem to Fat Boy Slim, the singer and songwriter of Barbadian and Belgian descent proffered a number of hits, issuing six albums between '70 and '75. The first four of these have now received expanded editions. And quite why Siffre isn't more spoken about needs to be rectified.

An openly gay, black man growing up in middle class London was bound to be the object of prejudice and throughout these albums the singer/songwriter reacts victoriously with humour and intelligence. Musically, there's a dose of Macca, Gilbert O'Sullivan and Nilsson (including a cover of Harry's 'Maybe' on the debut), a folksiness akin to Cat Stevens and the cool funk, soul and jazz vibes that Rodriguez touched upon with equal success. It's the moody folk of the debut album and the more produced leanings of *For The Children* that are the outright winners, but they're all great.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

SIMON & GARFUNKEL

The Complete Columbia

Albums Collection

★★★★★

Legacy 6-LP



Great to have these extraordinary, career-defining albums available on shiny plastic again. Newly re-

mastered, struck on 180 gram audiophile vinyl and sequestered in an estimable library box at that. The youthful pair of ex-rock 'n' rollers and former folk singers not only released one of the quintessential anthems of the emerging folk-rock movement in 1966, the Tom Wilson-fortified *The Sounds Of Silence*, but their final studio project in '69 featured a title track, the emotionally inspiring 'Bridge Over Troubled Water', that proved an instant classic.

Their close, distinctively balanced harmonies, reminiscent of The Everly Brothers, provide an inviting melodic sensibility for Simon's angst-ridden, oft portentous songs and is particularly to-the-fore on his few amatory compositions. Two self-produced titles, '66's often overlooked *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary And Thyme* and '68's *Bookends*, deserve special mention – the former generated five singles



Smoke gets in his eyes.
Bert in mid-60s action

Kissing Cousins



BERT JANSCH

It Don't Bother Me

★★★★★

Jack Orion

★★★★★

BERT JANSCH & JOHN RENBOURN

Bert And John

★★★★★

All Sanctuary CD/LPs

Jansch released these three albums in nine months in 1965 and '66. Renbourn features on all three, finally receiving co-billing on the latter. The former (his sophomore effort) celebrates its 50th anniversary, released a mere eight months after the debut and seen by some as a continuation of that laid-back, druggy, folksy vibe, though it lacks anything on par with 'Strolling Down The Highway' or 'Needle of Death'. Like Dylan, his smoky, sleepy vocals, while not pretty, suit his tunes perfectly, and therein lie the album's charms – rolling melodies that remain in the head long after the songs end and surely influencing everyone from Donovan and Nick Drake to Paul Simon and Roy Harper (who supplies one of his earliest

recorded vocals on a typically stoned 'A Man I'd Rather Be'). Renbourn's lead acoustic playing on 'My Lover' and the collaborative 'Lucky Thirteen', which he wrote, unveils an association that would continue for many years, and several of Jansch's short instrumentals reveal an early Davy Graham fascination.

The latter albums were recorded and released simultaneously in '66. *Jack Orion*'s legendary 10-minute title track is the centrepiece of the mostly traditional album, with Renbourn again along for the ride. His contrapuntal notes around Jansch's rolling melody line throughout the title track is awe-inspiring and may be the peak of both artist's early career. Also noteworthy is Jansch's drop-D-tuned arrangement of 'Blackwaterside' that he claimed Page nicked for 'Black Mountain Side'. Play 'em back-to-back and judge for yourself.

Bert And John seems almost anticlimactic, like the Rockpile scenario 14 years later – having recorded so many songs together on each other's albums, it seems fitting they "make it official". It's a loose collection, mostly instrumental, and the men knew each other so well that a nod and a wink is all it took to feel where the other was taking the mostly improvised, predominantly original tunes. Perhaps no other album encapsulates the magic that emanated from the scene centred around legendary folk hangout Les Cousins better than this one, a masterpiece of acoustic blues, folk, and jazz by two flatmates whose stars were still in ascendance.

Jeff Penczak

State Of Mind

SHAG
1969

★★★★★

**THE BITTER SEEDS/
ROCK SHOP**

State Of Your Mind

★★★★★

THE RAINBOW PRESS

There's A War On

★★★★★

**THE MONOCLES/THE
HIGHER ELEVATION**

**The Spider, The Fly And The
Boogie Man**

★★★★★

All Out-sider LPs



Four legitimate, fully-annotated and illustrated releases cement the reputation of the Guerssen Records

family as one of the most prolific and respected US '60s garage and psychedelic reissue enterprises around.

Shag are known to *Pebbles* fans for their fuzz punker, 'Stop And Listen', but less well-known is the band's album, issued on Gear Fab CD and now for the first time disseminated on vinyl. Frequenters of San Francisco bills and neighbours of The Grateful Dead, Shag deliver languid acid-blues typical of the era on 'Lovely Lady', whereas the flute-infused 'Gypsies In The Forest' is a dead-ringer for early Tull.

The Bitter Seeds were also denizens of the San Francisco scene, kicking up an R&B storm out of Monterey whilst appearing on bills with SF giants such as the Dead and the Airplane. A name change to The Rock Shop accompanied the incredible 'State of Your Mind' / 'Halo' 45, a frantic blast of dance hall acid mayhem from 1967 featured here together with unreleased recordings that in their entirety make up a no-brainer purchase for any US psych connoisseur.

The Rainbow Press' debut album has had a few bogus, crackly incarnations over the years but this



The Bitter Seeds: Phil Muzic

first legit vinyl edition of the New York State band's debut, reveals the '68 recording to be melodic, pop-psych with one fuzz pedal in the garage. It has a slightly baroque-pop feel, particularly in the vocal department, underpinned by tasteful keyboards and buzzing guitar leads, all illustrated by the moody title track. In many ways a neglected gem.

The Monocles, who evolved into The Higher Elevation between '65 and '68, had a high kill rate. Not just

content with one classic they gave us three with the *Pebbles* monster, 'The Spider And The Fly' by the former, and the latter producing the demented "must be heard to be believed" psych monologue 'The Diamond Mine' (with Dave Diamond) and the spacey 'Odyssey' - evoking *Bull Of The Woods*-era Elevators. The remainder is pleasant folk-rock and teen beat and a most satisfying selection by this Colorado band.

Richard Allen



Sly in reflective mood

(including 'Homeward Bound' and 'The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feelin' Groovy)'), while the latter, a pensive song cycle of sorts, is probably their most satisfying work.

Gary von Tersch

SLY & THE FAMILY STONE
Live At The Fillmore East
October 4th & 5th 1968

★★★★★

Epic Legacy 4-CD box set



Welcome to the sound of soul dynamite.

What we have here is a complete recording of Sly &

The Family Stone's four shows at New York's Fillmore East staged over two nights in October 1968. Recorded by Epic for release as live album that was ultimately shelved with the tapes being dispatched to the vaults, The Fillmore East recordings show just how powerful a live act Sly and the gang already were the best part of a year before their barnstorming performance at Woodstock.

Chief among the highlights here are versions of 'Colour Me True', 'Love City' and, most powerful of all, Sly's consciousness-raising call to arms 'Are You Ready'. Thanks to Sly's lively inter-

song communication with the audience and the sheer unstoppable power of the The Family Stone you get a tangible sense of occasion as soon as you hit the play button on this booty bag of electrifying live performances.

Grahame Bent

**PERCY SLEDGE /
BEN E KING**

The Very Best Of Percy Sledge & Ben E King

★★★★★

Rhino CD



April was a grim month for soul music after the world lost two of its greatest singers in Percy Sledge, then

Ben E King. As this handy twin set shows, their catalogues went a lot deeper than the two songs of theirs which were used in Levi Jeans commercials.

Percy's first hit was 1966's gorgeously desolate 'When A Man Loves A Woman', its sepulchral southern soul followed by further gems including 'Warm And Tender Love' and 'It Tears Me Up' while, as this set shows, he could also caress deep soul monuments such as 'Dark End Of The Street'.

From Alabama to Harlem and Ben E King, who left The Drifters and scored with New York City classic, 'Spanish Harlem', before 'Stand By Me' became his anthem. These are joined by further classics including 'Supernatural Thing' and 'What Is Soul?'

Here is some of the most sublime music ever recorded.

Kris Needs

DUSTY SPRINGFIELD

Come For A Dream: The UK Sessions 1970-71

★★★★★

Real Gone CD



After 1970's Gamble & Huff-helmed *A Brand New Me* (AKA From *Dusty With Love*), Ms Springfield's

albums became piecemeal affairs comprised of ad-hoc tracks recorded for Atlantic in the US and Philips in the UK. Indeed, it would be two and a half years before that album's follow-up, *See All Her Faces* – drawn largely from these sessions cut in London in mid-70 and late '71 – appeared, and then in the UK alone.

Constituting another "lost" early '70s Dusty album (see also Real Gone's recent *Faithful* set), these 17 tracks – most of which appear on the still-essential '99 set, *Dusty In London* – find Dusty tackling soulful rock, emotional torch songs, lachrymose ballads and Brazilian dazzlers. She may have been struggling to find a voice for the new decade but the quality of both performance and arrangement (Keith Mansfield, Peter Knight and Wally Stott, among others) would not be equalled again. 'Wasn't Born To Follow', 'How Can I Be Sure', 'Mixed Up Girl' and the title track alone should have fans and novices alike queuing up for this one.

Andy Morten

STONE THE CROWS

Stone The Crows / Ode To John Law

★★★★★

Angel Air CD



Fronted by Maggie Bell's husky Joplin-esque vocals and also boasting the talents of

bassist/vocalist Jimmy Dewar and ill-fated guitarist Les Harvey (younger brother of Alex), Stone The Crows with their potent brew of soul and blues sadly remain a somewhat undervalued act in the annals of early '70s British rock.

Originally released on Polydor in 1970, their self-titled debut has much to commend it, including the ferociously cranked 'Raining In My Heart', powerful re-workings of Josh White's 'Blind Man' and 'Fool On The Hill' and the 17-minute epic 'I Saw America'. With the exception of a cover

of Percy Mayfield's 'Danger Zone', *Ode To John Law* from the same year is entirely composed of STC originals and continues the band's exploration of the territory so potentially mapped out on its predecessor.

Both titles come with the added bonus of live tracks including 'Freedom Road' and the Crows' famously extended take of Dylan's 'Hollis Brown'.

Grahame Bent

CHIP TAYLOR

Gasoline

★★★★★

Retro World CD



Chip Taylor wrote era-defining songs ('Wild Thing', 'Angel Of The Morning', 'Picture Me Gone', 'I Can't Let Go',

'Anyway That You Want Me'), loved to live, did some gambling along that road, played a bunch of country music and to this day is a regular on the Americana circuit. This budget reissue of Chip's '71 solo debut (originally on Buddha) is a no-frills introduction to an album of solid, country-flecked singer-songwriter fare.

Beautifully crafted at Bell Studios *Gasoline* is warm and lush, and turns in some cracking songs; introspective, desperate, humorous, but all beauties. 'Swear To God Your Honour' is a Kristofferson-style send-up of "country ways" and 'Oh My Marie' could have fallen off Hayward and Lodge's *Blue Jays*.

Unfortunately, Chip's stab at that Merrilee Rush chart-topper, 'Angel Of The Morning', doesn't quite stack up, there are just too many impeccable versions out there.

Louis Comfort-Wiggett

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Happy Lovin' Time: Sunshine Pop From The Garpax Vaults

★★★★★

Big Beat CD



Alec Palao's delightful showcase of dreamy, fresh-as-a-daisy psychedelic pop is primarily the work of three ultra-talented souls: Gary S Paxton, a one-man singing, playing, writing, arranging, producing and engineering whirlwind; studio hand and songwriter Kenny Johnson; and in-house backing vocalist Curt Boettcher, no less.

Between 1966 and '69 Paxton, from the airless hothouse of a converted bus, coaxed a variety of acts to concoct an exquisite blend of *Pepper*-era Beatles and Zombies pop filtered through hazy Hollywood psychedelia and sunshine harmonies. Johnson recalls that, "We made way better records than we needed to for the budget. Gary wanted to make everything great." It shows.

Check The Four Freshmen's

'83 In '15



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Artifact: The Dawn Of Creation Records 1983-85

★★★★★

Cherry Red 5-CD box set

Creation Records, one of the big indie hitters of the '80s and '90s, found the zeitgeist time and time again. It gave platforms to *Loveless*, *Going Blank Again* and *Screamadelica*, eventually hitting mainstream pay dirt with Oasis. Alongside household names and cult favourites, the label hosted odder experiments like Felt's *Let The Snakes Crinkle Their Heads To Death* and Mclus' *The Poison Boyfriend*.

This new box set predates all that. The only real stars included here are Primal Scream and Jesus And Mary Chain (with the former in a gentle, jangly guise virtually unrecognisable from their fame years).

The first two CDs collate the label's singles in release order; the third is "rarities and album tracks"; the fourth demos; the fifth BBC

sessions. It's comprehensive, but there are omissions; one of the label's oddest and best singles, Les Zarjaz's 'One Charming Night', isn't here.

It begins with The Legend! – AKA journalist Everett True – and his awkward ranty '73 In '83'. It's a great single, but not an accurate barometer of what's to come. The main mood is psychedelic shambolic – a type of Velvet Underground-indebted, pre-C86, indie-pop. It's here, in varying quality, in absolute *spades*. Sometimes the style is done brilliantly: The Pastels' 'Baby Honey', The Loft's 'Up The Hill And Down The Slope', The Bodines' 'God Bless' and The Jasmine Minks' 'All Fall Down'. There are also a few terrible-but-distinctive numbers, like the toytown psych of 'Flowers In The Sky' by The Revolving Paint Dream.

The downside of this box is a general sameness; most of these bands were similarly influenced with analogous band structures (including a notable lack of women), lacking a My Bloody Valentine-esque heft, and hearing the lot in one go rams that home. The best disc for the non-fanatic is the third, the only one to involve a measure of curation. These selected oddments and album tracks are well-chosen (including a fascinating early take of JAMC's 'Just Like Honey'), and feature some raw live performances.

The inherent tension with a complete label box set is that you get the indifferent and the downright awful alongside the sparklers. It usually makes it suitable for the hardcore and few outside it. *Artifact*, in the final analysis, is no different.

Jeanette Leech

Jesus And Mary Chain with Bobby Gillespie, front



fabulous harmonies on 'Nowhere To Go', The Whatt Four's languid 'Dandelion Wine', the creepy psych-folk of The Chocolate Tunnel's 'Ostrich People' and great cuts from Dave Antrell, Mary Saxton, Willie & The Walkers, The Black Box and many more.

Vic Templar

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Groove With A Feeling: Sounds Of Memphis Boogie, Soul and Funk 1975-1985

★★★★★

BGP/Ace



Most Memphis soul sets focus on the time when The Big Easy was firing out hits on independent labels

such as Stax and Hi but, after the industry changed with musical trends, the city's studios had to adapt. As this collection of obscure gems from the Sounds Of Memphis operation shows, some labels managed to weather the changes with style and invention.

The label's initial success had been with names such as The Ovations but Sounds Of Memphis embraced the post-disco boogie sound and unleashed some humdingers which still kept the Memphis soul elements bubbling.

Many tracks here never saw release so the world can be happy to receive a new treasure trove of Memphis action from names including The Jacksonians (with their lovely take on The Spinners' 'I'll Be Around'), Everyday People, Freedom Express, Vision, Lee Moore, Fran Farley and Erma Shaw, plus 'Unknown Artist' covering Isaac Hayes' 'Do Your Thing'.

Kris Needs

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Motor City: The Motown Vocal Group Sound

★★★★★

Fantastic Voyage 3-CD



It's always fascinating to hear the music Berry Gordy released before the advent of The Supremes and

Motown's rise to world domination. This 89-track set is one of the most voluminous selections to date as compiler Laurence Cane-Honeysett reaches into the vaults of Tamla, Motown, Miracle, Gordy and Mel-O-Dy, along with Anna, Tri-Phi and Harvey.

The selection is divided between vocal groups such as The Temptations, Satintones, Miracles, Valadiers, Spinners and The Five Quails from Cleveland, and singers including Barrett Strong, Marc Johnson, Ty Hunter and Eddie Holland. Some tracks are more arcanelly

interesting than gripping but such microscopic documents are essential in this transient age, if only so lesser-known outings such as The Cap-Tans' 'Tight Skirts And Crazy Sweaters' or The Ecuador's 'You're My Desire' (featuring Etta James) don't vanish into specialist collectors' oblivion forever. And we love the scratches on Mickey McCuller's obviously priceless 'I'll Cry A Million Tears'.

Kris Needs

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Psychemagik Presents Magik Sunset Part Two

★★★★★

Leng CD/LP



Compilation number two in a four set series from crate diggers extraordinaire Danny McLewin and Tom Coveney, AKA Psychemagik, and it

Surf City Confidential



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Here Today: The Songs Of Brian Wilson

★★★★★

Ace CD

His place in history may be assured, but it's curious how poorly Brian Wilson's legacy has been reflected by other artists covering his songs.

There are a couple of explanations for this. Firstly, such compilations are usually overloaded with early "cars and girls" material, this being by far the most productive period of his career. Then, when we get to the "post-breakdown" years, explorations of Brian's work tend to dwell on largely ignored corners of his back catalogue or bootlegs. Throwaway surf-pop doesn't sit terribly well alongside re-imaginings of songs that were odd enough in their original form. Fuck 'Honking Down The Highway' - this is the man who wrote the sublime 'Our Sweet Love' (on *Sunflower*) for Chrissakes. Someone please cover that instead!

Here Today holds up better than many previous similar celebrations of Brian's work (including Ace's own 2003 release, *Pet Projects: The Brian Wilson Productions*) because it features a



Brian Wilson practices his bowling

block of material written during his most fertile period, including the faithfully-reproduced title track, a 1966 single for the then-fading teen idol, Bobby Vee. That it sank without a trace doesn't reflect badly on Vee, or any of the other five artists who delivered strong interpretations of songs from *Pet Sounds*. These include Kirsty MacColl's pretty take of 'You Still Believe In Me' from '81 and a soulful '75 version of 'God Only Knows' by gospel singer

Betty Everett, best known for her mega-hit, 'The Shoop Shoop Song (It's In His Kiss)'.

Inevitably, a surfeit of dated period pieces such as 'Farmer's Daughter', 'My Buddy Seat' and 'Move Out, Little Mustang' - recorded by the less-than-legendary Basil Swift & The Seagrams, The Hondells and Rally-Packs - prevent this 25-track collection from being an essential showcase of Brian's genius. That said, there are still more surprises

than howlers. Wondermint and latter-day Brian mentor Darian Sahanaja does a fine job of transforming 'Do You Have Any Regrets?' from clompy Sweet *Insanity* demo to majestic ballad, whilst orchestra leader Hugo Montenegro, famed for his renditions of spaghetti western theme tunes, delivers a killer version of 'Good Vibrations'. If only he'd credited the vocalists on the title track of his '69 album...

Chris Twomey

continues the duo's attempts to mould the most obscure disco, electro, soft-rock and yacht-pop numbers into a dreamy lysergic soundscape. Unless you've spent years pawing through racks at record shops from here to the back of beyond, you won't have heard most of the groups contained within (The Electric Connection, anyone? Trepidant's? Plaisirs Erotique, or Glenn?).

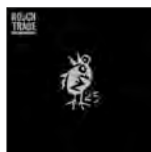
Obscurity means nothing however if the quality is lacking – and for the most part, Psychemagik's mining has delivered gold, 13 tracks of blissed-out Balearic grooves bathed in orange sunshine. Occasional dud notes prove that not everything needs to be resurrected from limbo (Instrumental Group Cabas sound like a particularly shonky cruise ship band), but for the most part, this is a fine addition to an expanding series of comps.

Tom Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS Rough Trade Shops: Heavenly 25

★★★★★

Rough Trade 2-CD



The music business may have changed beyond recognition since Heavenly first introduced us to the disparate

delights of Manic Street Preachers and Saint Etienne 25 years ago, but it's heartening to discover there's still great affection for a label whose only "brand identity" is its willingness to take a punt on "alternative" creative Britain. As this two-disc celebration of Heavenly's 25th anniversary reveals, their roster appears to be as wildly inconsistent, yet exciting, as ever.

CD one opens on a bit of a "So what?" moment with 'Hermit's On Holiday' by the over-lauded Drinks before featuring stand-out moments by current signings such as Hooton Tennis Club, The Wytches, TOY, Gwenno and the brilliant Temples. The second CD is a collation of Heavenly's recent Record Store Day single releases, previously only available on vinyl.

As you'd expect, there's no stylistic consistency, but that's Heavenly – the Quality Street of indie labels – for you. Whoever thought it was a good idea to sell Coconut Éclairs alongside Strawberry Delight?

Chris Twomey

VARIOUS ARTISTS Small Town Country Volume 1

★★★★★

Orion Read CD/LP



Like a country music *Garage Punk Unknowns* or *Purple Heart Surgery*, these 14 Texan sides cut as

acetates in the '60s and '70s capture country music in its purest, most natural and unadulterated form. Mainly avoiding the hippie country-rock styles

heard on distributors Light In The Attic's essential *Country Funk* (although the rough diamond and semi rockin' 'Good Times' by Andy Johnson could easily sit on that series), these songs predominantly stick close to the forlorn country music beloved of short-haired, yodelling Americans in awe of Hank Williams.

Ron McFarlin's 'Death Of Bobby Darin' is an enjoyable oddity, the spoken 'Second Rate' by Lefty Bachelor is funny and Kenny Brent & Donna Harris' 'Shadows Of You' is excellent, but the rest of this set borders on the forgettable and schmaltzy... and occasionally excruciating.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

VARIOUS ARTISTS Troxy Music Screen 2

★★★★★

Croydon Municipal CD



Martin Green is your usher for another delve into primarily British '50s and '60s film themes for Bob

Stanley's marvellous Croydon Municipal imprint. No getting away from this being another age altogether, where the soundtrack humbly accompanied the credits or simply provided a vocal divertissement for the lead actor(s).

Into the latter category sat the novelty duet, in this case Juliet Mills and Michael Redgrave's rather enjoyable calypso, 'No My Darling Daughter'. Deeply nostalgic for those of a certain age will be Henry Mancini's 'Baby Elephant Walk' and nursery sing-along, 'The Big Ship Sails on the Alley-Alley-O'. We have frantic big band orchestrations (Shorty Rogers' 'The Wild Ones') and jaunty jazz ensemble pieces (Ken Jones' 'Paper Chase' and Johnny Scott's 'Scott Free'), whilst 'Never Let Go' is unmistakable early John Barry with trademark Vic Flick twang and pizzicato strings.

Sure, it's frightfully dated, but the best here possess a popcorn bucket load of charm.

Vic Templar

VARIOUS ARTISTS Turtle Records: Pioneering British Jazz 1970-1971

★★★★★

RPM 3-CD box set



This three CD box set documents three distinct voices from the uniquely fruitful, if ultimately, short-lived golden

age of British progressive jazz. Founded by producer Peter Eden as an outlet for home-grown talents unafraid of creative risk taking and sailing close to the edge, the label's three album releases – Mike Osborne's *Outbreak*, Howard Riley's *Flight* and John Taylor's *Pause And Think Again*, which between them feature a virtual check list of the most

Off Their Rockers

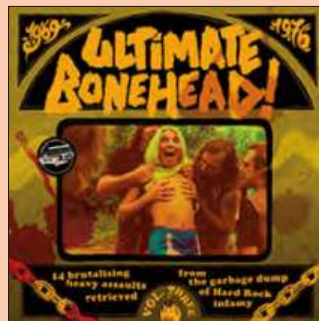
VARIOUS ARTISTS

Ultimate Bonehead

Volumes 3 & 4

Both ★★★★★

Both Belter LPs



Hot on the heels of the first two releases in this series of arcane obscurities, Volume 3 leans to the harder, rockier elements of the thud and blunder that those armies of boogie bedevilled wannabes, who had escaped their teen garage roots for the crimson velour décor of the local booze parlour or the wonky-tonk hardwood floors and exotically smoky haze of now forgotten venues, decided to commit to posterity.

From the chunky Jesse Hector-like vocals of Pelican Peace Band's 'Take It Off' through the dodgy lyrics and speed backing of Hot Ash's 'Jail Bait' taking in the zipwire guitar and floundering production of 'Bring It On Home' by Pendulum, this is a collection of unpretentious, punching, pounding proto-metal and percussive rock. Caps must be doffed in the direction of the harmony-packed

rauncherama of Five By Five's wonderful '15 Going On 20' then add in copious cuts of fuzz stomp, swirling organ and basement bass and you've got a knuckle sandwich of noise that just won't quit.

Volume 4 leans more towards the heavy-psych end of the Richter scale. Acknowledgement must be handed to Purple Sun for working the name of their band into the lyrics of album opener, 'Doomsday', and for the keyboard from the afterlife and other-dimensional vocals of Rogues' 'Coming Home'. There are echoes of 'Zig Zag Wanderer'-era Magic Band on former '50s rocker Larry Lynn's 'Diamond Lady' and some tempo-juggling madness in the form of 'Are We Alone' (question mark not included) by Shepherd.

The second side of this release takes off into B-side horror territory with the Sabbath growling guitar that punctuates 'The Devil's Come' by The What and the proggy heaviness underpinning Darkseid's 'Land Of The Darker Sun'. Not accepting their place scrubbing the bottom stair of the pantheon of rock, Stone Foxx show an utterly confident swagger on 'Gypsy Lady', whilst 'Yours Truly, Jack The Ripper' sticks Whitechapel and Detroit in the phonic blender and emerges with novelty goth horror *par excellence*.

Lovingly cleaned up and packed with Satanic soundbites and stream of unconsciousness lyrics, these saved sounds from the landfill of the loud scream for your attention!

Henry Hutton

happening British jazz musicians of the era – are highly evocative of the liberated atmosphere of the late '60s and early '70s with original pressings of each having long since taken on the mantle of highly prized collector's items.

This hugely welcome anthology marks the first time any of the three titles has been reissued on any format. Additionally, the box set includes a 56-page booklet penned by Colin Harper, author of superb biographies of John McLaughlin and Bert Jansch.

Grahame Bent

MICHAEL YONKERS Neverending Light Beam From Planet 00s / Deep Within Home Planet / Plan A

★★★★★

Mystra LP



Michael Yonkers is not well-known, but he has a long history. Originally in a surf act, Yonkers and his bandmates

evolved the sound into heavy frat-rock, good enough to attract the attention of Sire Records. Their sole album, 1967's *Microminiature Love* – recorded in one hour – was subject to contract hoo-ha and not released until 2002.

Following the decades-delayed release, Yonkers returned to recording, but this time on a smaller scale. Every year, between 2003 and 2007 he would record his practice sessions with one guitar, one microphone and one effects box, distributing the results to friends on CDR. *Neverending...* now brings the best of these sessions to a wider audience.

The songs are great: scratchy and uncompromising, but by no means untuneful or unstructured. In fact, the mainly hard-rock sound recalls the later, weighty work of cult bands like Jan Dukes De Grey.

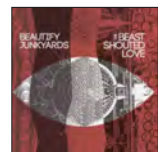
A limited edition, it comes in a handmade cover by Mystra label owner and lo-fi free-folk artist, Joshua Burkett.

Jeanette Leech

BEAUTIFY JUNKYARDS The Beast Shouted Love

★★★★★

Mega Dodo CD/LP



Lisbon's Beautify Junkyards took an unusual step in having their 2013 debut album be a collection of

covers, but they're wisely following it up – two years later – with a set of self-penned tunes. That first full-length release was comprised of their versions of mostly autumnal folk material, with occasional diversions into takes on tracks originally done by Kraftwerk and Os Mutantes.

The Beast Who Shouted Love is very much in keeping with the sounds and feels of the covers album. If you hadn't heard the debut and listened to this collection, you would probably guess that they like Heron, Vashti Bunyan and Donovan, whose tunes they interpreted on that eponymous record. A lot of their own songs have the same gentle, serene, lightly psychedelic feel as the work of those artists who have inspired them, with slight departures into Tropicalia-influenced exoticism.

Brian Greene

JACKSON BOONE Natural Changes

★★★★★

Self-released CD



On his second album, Jackson Boone creates a sound world that's forever on the cusp of the '60s and '70s, artfully poised between blissed out and rockin' out. If you dig the lush, laid-back Pink Floyd of *Meddle*, then you'll love *Natural Changes*.

Opening track 'Lala' sets the template for much of what's to come, its lazy acoustic guitar, wandering bass and sun-kissed strings evoking the beautiful melancholy of a summer's day that can't last. 'Dolphin Turned Into A Cat' is more playful, Boone's vocals alternating between heavy-lidded and helium-high, but there's a darker undertow too. This sense of something sinister in Paradise continues with 'Moonbeam', its cosmic reverie interrupted by a harsh mechanical beat. Similarly, 'Open' and 'Strawberry Vibes' are acid-in-the-water trippy, Boone's stoned falsetto gradually turning into a howl of anguish.

Natural Changes is easy listening as in "hard to dislike" – just watch out

for the comedown.

Joe Banks

THE BUTTERSCOTCH CATHEDRAL The Butterscotch Cathedral

★★★★★

Trouble In Mind LP



Matt Rendon (Resonars, Lenguas Largas) ably achieves his stated goal of an homage to the concept

albums of the '60s and '70s, on this wonderfully authentic and immersive album. With influences drawn from the masterworks of The Who, The Beach Boys and many others, *The Butterscotch Cathedral* creates a feeling of loose yet powerful narrative, as pretty melodies morph into and out of momentary segments of atmospheric sound and psychedelic, choral splendour.

This approach, that sees three long tracks artfully and subtly divided into discrete songs, successfully transports the listener on a pleasant journey that is potently nostalgic whilst remaining strangely pertinent to now. Although listeners may find themselves playing spot the reference, with *Pet Sounds*,

Tommy and the *Magical Mystery Tour* amongst the key albums whose ghosts can be heard, Rendon, along with collaborators Chris Ayers and Jim Waters, brings enough originality to make this new and bold.

Greg Healey

NICOLAS GODIN Contrepoint

★★★★★

Because Music CD/LP



As one half of Air, Nicolas Godin has made some rather impressive music over the past 20 years. Now solo, he's gone even further, making music that binds together the primary influence of Bach via pianist Glenn Gould into future-retroism and, indeed, the music of tomorrow. Taking the theme of each piece from Bach, Godin then spins silken, cinematic tapestries that touch upon all manner of record boxes encompassing jazz, Euro '60s and '70s art house scores, taut Giallo thrills, smooth '70s pop and proggy late '70s and early '80s synth soundscapes creating ambrosia for the senses, performed with immense skill and produced to perfection.



Jackson: a positive Boone

A Macedonian choir, French and Brazilian singers Gordon Tracks and Marcelo Camelo, New Zealand psych maverick Connan Mockasin and Italian author Alessandro Barrico all add inimitable touches to this rich, rewarding and often surprising musical tapestry. Everything fits. 'Bach Off', undoubtedly the album's calling card, betters every '70s film score maestro. Perfection.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

GOLDEN VOID

Berkana

★★★★★

Thrill Jockey CD/LP



Heralded as the next big thing in San Francisco Bay Area psychedelic rock, Golden Void's second album,

Berkana, from its very outset, is a work of craftsmanship than demonstrates the technicality and experience of its protagonists with sufficient subtlety so as not to over shadow the fact that this is quite simply a damn fine groovy rock album.

Frontman Isiah Mitchell's vocals exude the tortured soulfulness of Soundgarden's Chris Cornell, with the album's slower tracks – 'Silent Season' and 'Astral Plane' immediately jump to mind – showcasing his talents perfectly. Camilla Saufley-Mitchell's complementary Hammond-esque interludes and flute melodies introduce a few folkier touches to what is otherwise simply a great solid piece of West Coast rock 'n' roll.

Closing with its finest moment in the shape of the trippy and tribal, guitar-bending ballad, 'Storm And Feather', *Berkana* is 42 minutes of pure joy. It's been too long coming, but well worth the wait.

David Savage

GOSPELBEACH

Pacific Surf Line

★★★★★

Alive CD/LP



Led by the mighty Brent Rademaker, LA music scene fixture and one time member of Further, The Tyde

and Beachwood Sparks, Gospelbeach is a Californian super group of sorts, culling members from all the aforementioned bands plus personnel from The Chris Robinson Brotherhood, Ryan Adams & The Cardinals and Everest. Their music is as joyous and buoyant as the technicolour cartoon that adorns the album cover, and the band gives out a loosey-goosey country-rock vibe that recalls The New Riders Of The Purple Sage, The First National Band and The Flying Burrito Brothers, all played at a Malibu beachside jam at dusk.

Vibes are nothing without good songwriting, however, and

Gospelbeach have got classic tunes in spades. 'Sunshine Skyline' could have been plucked from Roger McGuinn at the height of his powers, whilst Tom Petty would be happy to call 'Out Of My Mind' his own. Unreservedly recommended for all you cosmic country heads out there.

Tom Patterson

FAY HALLAM

Corona

★★★★★

Blow Up CD/LP



Taking inspiration from the bossa-nova of Astrud Gilberto, the breathy 'Se Mi Ami' and the sultry

'Stars' bookend the welcome return of Fay Hallam. Like drawing back the curtains to see the sunshine sweeping into the room, the sunny samba of 'Arco' ushers in a new dawn for our keyboard caper.

It's a shame this album doesn't go the whole distance and transport us back to an exotic world of Tropicalia sounds. Instead, *The Italian Job* and *Get Carter* sound-tracks spring to mind in the hazy soulful ambience of 'Sunny' and 'Let Me Into Your Soul' or the playful muzak of 'Lido'. A slow-burning soulful cover of 'Maybe I'm Amazed' fits perfectly with the reflective mood that prevails, particularly on the Carpenters meets Saint Etienne-influenced 'Summers Love'.

A departure from the Hammond-heavy sound we've become accustomed to but a worthy follow up to the recent *Lost In Sound* collaboration with The Bongolian nonetheless.

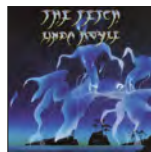
Paul Ritchie

LINDA HOYLE

The Fetch

★★★★★

Angel Air CD



Making Vashti Bunyan look prolific, Linda Hoyle has been absent some 44 years since her debut

solo record. Nothing on her new LP is quite as energetic as *Pieces Of Me*, yet *The Fetch*, which could sound like a lost artefact itself if the modern production didn't just about give it away, still has a beguiling depth.

Demanding your full attention, Hoyle's voice is the star of the show, having lost none of its unique mix of power and delicacy. It's your guide through 12 tracks of jazzy folk, with melancholy, nostalgic lyrics and notable influences from The Great American Songbook ('It's The World'). The production and instrumentation, Mo Foster's bass particularly, is restrained and tasteful, and while the smoothness and lack of grit might not be to everyone's taste (although 'Earth And Stars' gets good and weird) this



feels very much like an honest, complete statement of where Linda is now.

Christopher Budd

SUSAN JAMES

Sea Glass

★★★★★

SJM CD



Forgive the cliché, but Susan James really could be a contender for the Best Artist No One (well, few) Has Ever

Heard Of award. The Californian singer-songwriter has been active for two decades, during which she's toured with – and converted – all sorts, including Bob Weir and Lindsey Buckingham.

High Llamas front man Sean O'Hagan has been another admirer for years, and the pair finally collaborated on *Sea Glass*, Susan's sixth and best album to date. O'Hagan adds his trademark lush instrumental arrangements to several tracks on this wonderful record, opening with the richly-textured 'Poseidon's Daughter',

which bears favourable comparisons to the country-folk, baroque-pop of Judee Sill.

Vocally, Susan James may not possess the "fruitiness" of the late Sill, but she has a fine multi-octave voice nonetheless and her compositional talents evoke a similar sense of timelessness and depth.

Chris Twomey

McFADDEN'S PARACHUTE

Sugar 3

★★★★★

Peter Fonda CD



The latest in a long line of recordings by one-man garage-psych dreamer Darren Brennessel AKA the

wonderfully-monikered McFadden's Parachute. On *Sugar 3*, as with previous outings, the listener is taken on a wild time trip loaded with paisley-hued fun and games. The three and four chord turnarounds, fuzz-tone leads, keyboard spatterings and nothing fancy drumming conjured up are always worthy of attention, and can

strike gold on occasion.

McFadden's Parachute's particular, sometimes peculiar way with chords and words and poetic vocalising, is quite mesmerising at times, and if you're a fan of Sky Saxon, Faine Jade, even early Neil Young, and have a passion for the primitively pulsating rhythms of garage-style psychedelia, you will find much to be enamoured with here. 'I Can't Seem To Get It Right' is a *bona fide* "hit" in waiting, while 'Robin Gibb Is Dying' is obviously sad, but funny too – an exercise in quirky mod-pop excellence. Get on this flight now!

Lenny Helsing

MERCURY REV The Light In You

★★★★★

Bella Union CD/LP



This is the first Mercury Rev record to be self-produced by core members Jonathan Donahue and Grasshopper (scheduling commitments meant that it's the first without Dave Fridmann at the controls) and their personal and physical upheavals alluded to in the album's accompanying press release seem to have given the band renewed focus. Gone are the electronic flourishes of 2008's *Snowflake*

Midnight as they return to the grand melodic songwriting of *Deserters Songs* and *All Is Dream*.

It's a wonderfully sequenced record, implying a journey from despair to redemption. The first half is a masterclass in lush, hazy dream-pop; 'Central Park East' and the driving 'Emotional Free Fall' being particular highlights. As the album progresses though it throws up some wonderfully unexpected moments of pure pop joy, starting with the sunrise of 'Coming Up For Air' and ending with euphoric closer 'Rainy Day Music', a joyful celebration of the healing power of music. An album to stand proudly amongst their finest work.

Paul Osborne

MILD HIGH CLUB

Timeline

★★★★★

Circle Star DL



Alexander Brettin, the LA-based, jazz schooled muso behind Mild High Club comes across as somewhat earnest when describing his music. Themes such as the alienation of the individual in the social media world are paramount, alongside reflections on the nature of creative processes, in songs such as 'Note To Self' and 'You And Me'.

Recorded in the ad-hoc, lo-fi home recording tradition that's the hallmark

of artists like Tim Presley, this album draws influences from the early songsmithery of Todd Rundgren, circa '71's *Runt*. Alongside this there are undoubted echoes of Elton John's superb *Tumbleweed Connection*.

Despite its serious intent and sometimes gloomy timbre, *Timeline* has an engaging edge and many unusual, catchy tunes. The paired back sound, with its mixture of early '70s transatlantic singer-songwriter pop and vague '60s psych undertones, make this excellent debut album well worth checking out.

Greg Healey

MONOPHONICS

Sound Of Sinning

★★★★★

Monophonics CD/LP



Sound Of Sinning, the latest record from San Francisco's self-described "psychedelic soul" group Monophonics, dips in and out of sonic fuzz. Guitars and organ whirl around one another while holding onto a recognizably nostalgic funk groove. Singer/organist Kelly Finnigan's vocals are more faraway and echoic on this album, allowing his voice to act as a contributing instrument rather than the focal point. On *Sound Of Sinning*, Monophonics move deeper into eccentric soul territory, using their '60-inspired roots as a jump-off point into

vast and exciting soundscapes.

'La La La Love Me' and 'Strange Love' have an intriguing Zombies/Eric Burdon-ish Summer Of Love R&B flair, but with an added depth of modern mystery. Album closer, 'Everyone's Got...' is a primarily instrumental moody funk jam with choir backing vocals and a throbbing bass line. It's not the same ole' throwback record; it goes to unexpected places. Think less blue-eyed soul revival and more lost Capsoul Label tunes.

Ashley Brooks

MARTIN NEWELL

Teatime Assortment

★★★★★

Captured Tracks CD/2-LP



It's nice to see that "the wild man of Wivenhoe" has been keeping busy of late. Last year saw the release of his superb *Return To Bohemia* album, he continues to chronicle the lives of the eccentric inhabitants of his imaginary home town via Mule TV and he'll be bringing *The Golden Afternoon*, his occasional soiree of poetry and song, to The Big Smoke in September this year.

In his latest, 24-track album, recorded between 2010 and 2014, Newell continues his pop-sike exploration of the small town English psyche. It's a joyous and occasionally wistful collection of lush, Brian Wilson-esque melodies that is nevertheless as evocative of a vanishing English idyll as half-baked summers, warm beer, cycling bobbies and village greens.

It's doubtful that this quiet release will increase his following beyond its cult status, but then Newell, thankfully, remains resolutely immune to the allure of showbiz and fame.

Jason Hobart

PROMISED LAND SOUND For Use And Delight

★★★★★

Paradise Of Bachelors CD/LP



The second album from Nashville-based alt-country rockers Promised Land Sound picks up where their debut self-titled album left off, taking the cosmic Americana of The Byrds, Burritos and Band and adding light touches of psych and dreamy melodies to create a sound which burns brightly.

The gorgeous first single, 'She Takes Me There', is a fine example of what they do best, with Harrison-esque slide guitar and a vocal melody which recalls The Jayhawks' finer moments. 'Through The Seasons' is a gentle rolling groove with fluid country licks, whilst 'Golden Child' kicks in as a heavy chugging rocker before breaking down to an almost krautrock middle section, which then explodes to life



There's no Newell like an old Newell

Simon Love

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME

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- THE GUARDIAN

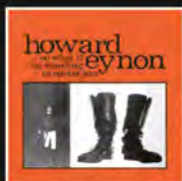
"A POTTY-MOUTHED UK VERSION OF FATHER
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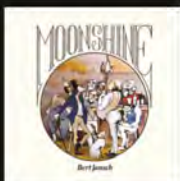
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Bert Jansch
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Tame Impala's Kevin Parker

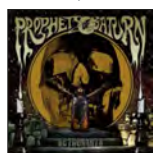
with a fiery solo. There's an obvious comparison with Beachwood Sparks ('Canfield Drive' comes on like a lost Sparks classic) but there's enough happening here sonically for PLS to transcend their influences and stand on their own as major contenders.

Paul Osborne

PROPHETS OF SATURN Retronauts

★★★★★

HeviSike CD/LP



There's been quite an onslaught of retro heavy-rock this year so far, and though thoroughly enjoyable, accusations of formulaic lommi and co homages can be sometimes justifiably knocked about. There are few occasions when a band truly stamps their mark on a genre that is retrogressive by its very nature in a fresh and new way. Australia's Child is one such example; another is found here with Leicester doom metal riff crushers, Prophets Of Saturn.

Never more aptly named, *Retronauts* is a potent mix of Sabbath and Blue Cheer, with a few slices of The Sonics thrown in good measure, then chugged out at a beautiful head-nodding pace that has more down tuned low end weight than you could

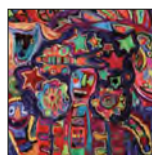
ever wish for. Perfectly executed, beautifully played and catchily written – I dare anyone to try and match this in the heavy-psych stakes this year. An absolute behemoth of a record.

David Savage

THE SHIFTING SANDS Cosmic Radio Station

★★★★★

Fishrider/Occultation CD/LP



Fresh out of Dunedin, home to such New Zealand greats as 3Ds, The Chills and The Verlaines, come The Shifting Sands, a psychedelic shoegaze trio whose promising second album suggests there may finally be an heir to those pioneering bands who first laid down the Dunedin Sound back 30 years ago (unsurprisingly, as David Kilgour of semi-legendary locals The Clean makes an appearance on a few tracks).

Opener 'Waiting For The Sun' comes on like a poppier, more clean-living Jesus And Mary Chain, whilst single 'All The Stars' shows off an elegiac side to the band, a string-laden ballad with hazy vocals that wouldn't feel out of place on an Elliott Smith album. Elsewhere, the ghosts of Slowdive, Ride, Sonic Youth and NZ artists like Bailter Space flit by, the

whole album both a fine evocation and updating of those alternative '80s and '90s sounds.

Tom Patterson

THE SINE WAVES Into The Syntax Era With

★★★★★

Sine Lab CD



Inhabiting that small cross-section in the middle of the Venn diagram of science and surf music, Hastings quartet The Sine Waves are influenced as much by local hero Alan Turing as they are Joe Meek and Dick Dale. In many ways, this is a straight-up, impeccable surf album; there's a cover of The Surfaris' 'Storm Surf', and a cover of The Mummies' 'The Fly', but it's truly brought alive by the little samples and scientific archive soundbites that bridge tracks. Infusing cheery, up-beat surf with the spirit of Sirs Clive Sinclair and Christopher Cockerell makes remarkable sense – the two, seemingly disparate fields share a certain optimism in the future.

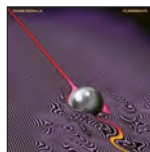
There's many a knowing wink to pop culture: 'They Peel Them With Their Metal Knives' is a homage to the Smash advert aliens, while 'Meltedown At Magnox' invokes every '70s kids worst nightmare. The Sine Waves have hit on a winning formula – get into them or be a four-sided polygon.

Kate Hodges

TAME IMPALA Currents

★★★★★

Modular Recordings CD/LP



The rise of Tame Impala from stoned psychedelic newcomers to global stars is one that many of us have watched with satisfaction and, as the first neo-psych band to infiltrate the mainstream with their carefully crafted space-rock, they paved the way for Temples, Pond et al to follow in their wake. But where to go when you've explored outer space and every band and his uncle with some backwards guitar is claiming they're cosmic voyagers? The answer, it seems, is straight to the disco.

Whilst many will throw up their arms that Kevin Parker has embraced his inner Bee Gee and made his most "pop" record yet, *Currents* still maintains enough of its predecessor's sonic vision to make it distinctively Tame Impala. 'Let It Happen' and 'The Less I Know' are perfect reverb-heavy meshes of dreamy, danceable pop and, although there's a bit too much emphasis on '80s style synths and little variation in sound, surely you'd rather the kids were into this than the latest musical vomit served up by David Guetta or Calvin Harris? Thought so.

Paul Osborne

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Daptone Gold II

★★★★★

Daptone CD/LP



The communal spirit of the Daptone family echoes the in-house studio ensembles of yore,

where a dependable group of musicians would lay down the grooves for rookie artists to add their soul. Updating that model for the 21st century funkateer, this lovingly-crafted second volume cherry picks Daptone highlights from the last six years onto one tidy package, LP or CD, depending on your predilection.

On the menu are five beatific Sharon Jones tracks including the slick 'Better Things To Do' and her faithful cover of Shuggie Otis' 'Inspiration Information'. Stepping from the shadows, her backing singers, Saun & Starr make sweet soul sounds of their own and Charles Bradley brings the house down with two slabs of tortured soul. There are a couple of heady Hammond workouts by The Sugarman 3, infectious rhythmic Afrobeat from Antibatas, rough-hewn funk from Naomi Shelton and down-home gospel with Como Mamas.

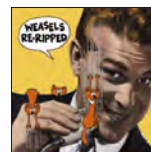
Dapper stuff indeed.

Paul Ritchie

VARIOUS ARTISTS Weasels Re-Ripped

★★★★★

Cordelia CD



Cordelia are no strangers to messing with the music of Frank Zappa. They have previously released

an album of surf instrumental re-workings of a wide range of Zappa clas-sics (*Lemme Take You To The Beach*) and this time around the subject for reappraisal is The Mothers' 1970 opus, *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*.

Faithfully retaining the original album's running order, the re-ripping of *Weasels* proceeds via bending, stretching and extrapolating the original album tracks in all manner of directions by a cast of participants operating under the suitably Zappa-fied IDs of Inventionis Mater, Gumbo Variation, Muffin Men, Zappatistas and The Early Zappa Renaissance Orchestra.

From the complete out there-ness of the opening 'Didja Get Any Onya?' through the pseudo-jazz ramblings of 'Toads Of The Short Forest' and 'The Eric Dolphy Memorial Barbecue' to the comparative sanity of 'My Guitar Wants To Kill Your Mama', *Weasels* is comprehensively deconstructed and reassembled with predictably challenging results.

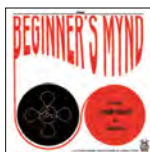
Grahame Bent

BEGINNER'S MYND

I Found You Out / When You Go

★★★★★

13 O'Clock



This is the debut from Beginner's Mynd, a combo originating from the US capital, Washington D.C.

Essentially, the overall sound and approach of the Mynd, especially on the featured topline 'I Found You Out', appears deeply rooted in the realms of folk-imbued garage-rock. The bright 12-string tones and organic feel also serves to accentuate some of the more melodic, and lyrical pathways that, while not blindingly obvious, are nonetheless thoroughly effective and infectious. However temporary, the

sound which the group produces seeks to blow away any old cobwebs that your own mind may be housing.

With the flipside, 'When You Go', we hear something altogether different, more authentically *Fading Yellow*-like in its jauntily rhythmic patterns, oddly treated vocals, brief bursts of piano and thick dollops of fuzz.

Lenny Helsing

WESLEY FULLER

The Dancer / Shock Me

★★★★★

Self-released



As Kevin Parker steers his Tame Impala further into pastures new with each album, those of us left mourning

Innerspeaker's ragged charms might care to welcome his fellow countryman and sonic explorer Wesley Fuller's similarly exotic, glam/psych-indebted take on the classic pop song into their hearts. Not that Fuller's recordings – few as they currently are – invite comparison with the free-flowing looseness of the Impala. This is precision engineering; there's no fat here, just tightly constructed and dynamically recorded pop that screams 2015 as much as it does 1975.

'The Dancer' is built round a tasty guitar riff, glammy hand claps and multi-layered vocal harmonies that bring mid-70s Yes to this writer's mind. But it's the drums – crisp, centre-stage and high in the mix – that drive the whole thing. 'Shock Me'

Eight Miles Above Sea Level

GRAHAME BENT scrutinises Fruit de Mer's latest batch of plastic pleasures

Fruits de Mer continue its love affair with the 7" single with this fistful of limited edition new releases to add to their rapidly expanding and ever diversifying discography.



The third and final instalment of the *Momentary* series, **MOMENTARY THREE** (★★★★★)

arrives offering two more interpretations of classic Pink Floyd compositions one of which, Sendelica's fearsome re-modelling of 'The Nile Song', first saw the light of day on the *Momentary Lapse Of Vinyl* CD, while the other is an all new revisitation of 'Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun' by Astralasia.

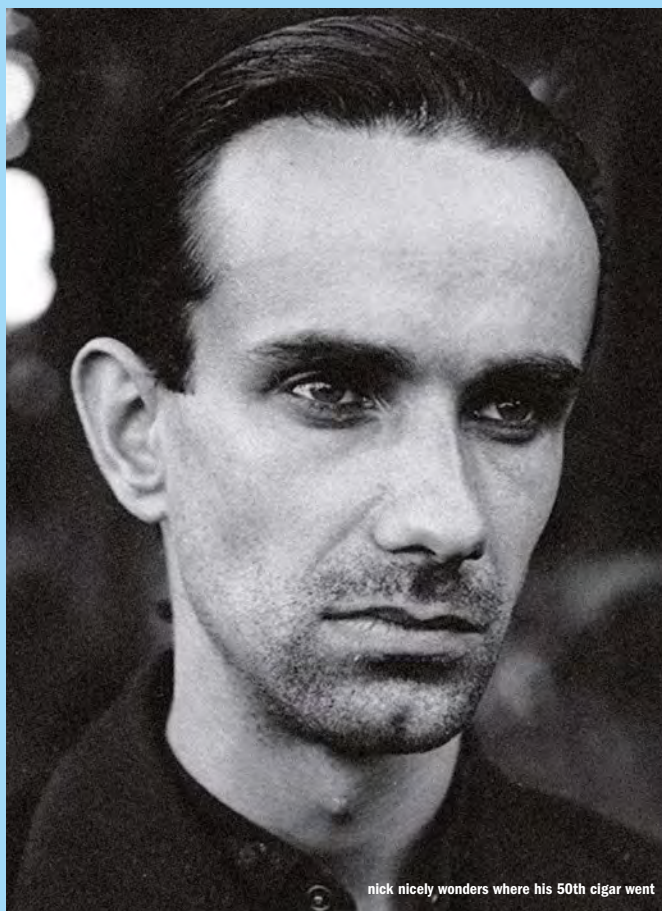
Once upon a time (circa 1982) **NICK NICELY** released the sublime and decidedly Barrett-esque 'Hilly Fields (1892)' 45. Not only was it a *bona fide* slice of classic home-grown Brit psych, the same was also true of the single's B-side, the frankly surreal '49 Cigars', which is now once again back in circulation on the *49 Cigars* four-track EP (★★★★★) which, for good measure, also includes an extended live version of said marvel.

Not to be outdone by their British cousins, Dusseldorf psychonauts **VIBRAVOID** get in on the act with the *Stepping Stone* three-track EP (★★★★★) which finds them revisiting '60s garage band staple ('I'm Not Your) Stepping Stone', Traffic's 'Hole In My Shoe' and HP Lovecraft's 'The White Ship'. While The Monkees and Traffic covers stay faithful to the originals, Vibravoid get considerably spacier on their take of the already seriously spectral 'The White Ship'.

From the seriously trippy to the mildly so, new recruits to the Fruits de Mer stable and proponents of The Classic Canterbury Sound, Devon's **MAGIC BUS** compliment 'Seven Wonders' (★★★★★) with an understated reworking of The Byrds' 'Eight Miles High'.

Finally, not content with releasing their first new studio album in 40-

odd years, Ireland's veteran acid-folk double act **TIR NA NOG** return with a 45 that combines the new with the old in the form of 'Richochet' (★★★★★) from the new LP, *The Dark Dance*, backed with a live recording of 'Tir na nOg', the song which gave the duo their name way back on their self-titled debut album in '71.



nick nicely wonders where his 50th cigar went

is more subdued, inhabiting a diabolical hinterland somewhere between an early '80s John Hughes movie soundtrack, prime early '70s Beach Boys and some obscure Belgian psych cash-in 45 from '69. Album please.

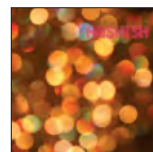
Andy Morten

HASHISH

Outer Spaced / The Smoke Of Hashish

★★★★★

Subliminal Sounds



I usually make it a policy to avoid groups that too heavily reference their recreational drug of choice. In

this case it's as obvious as you can get, but there's also a feeling that somewhere through the haze, there might be something worthy of your attention going on.

What emerges are a couple of (rather similar) tracks of dancey, soundtracky, atmospheric stuff, propelled by a head-nodding (not too vigorously, of course) rhythm track that The Prodigy might have laid down in the mid-90s, all put together by Swedish producer and label man, Stefan Kéry.

In fact, were it 1996, this would be huge. Even so, there's enough quality in the dense production to make one curious for the promised album later this year, even if the musical ideas feel stretched thin at times. It'll be interesting to see what variety Kéry can bring to proceedings beyond this sampler.

Christopher Budd

THE HIGHER STATE (Consider It) A Debt Repaid / In A World That Just Don't Care

★★★★★

13 O'Clock



When news filtered out over the last 18 months or so that The Higher State had experienced a split

within their ranks, some folks, unsurprisingly, were shocked and saddened. Yet, on the evidence of these new fruits, you'd have to know their sound intimately to know that anything drastic had taken place.

Cast your mind back to the snotty '66 folk-punk trajectory the group would take us through on their debut *From Round Here* album and it's that similar freshness that coats '(Consider It) A Debt Repaid' and its smouldering counterpart, 'In A World That Just Don't Care'. Guitarist, lead singer and founder Marty Ratcliffe's mystic martyr whine still tells of things unfair, and unjust in his/our hypocritical, apathetic



Cut-out method with Night Dials

Photo by Sanna Glasbergen

and uncaring world. Chiming flecks of 12-string guitar action and cheesed-off vocals spur the songs onward. Augmented by cool garagey organ lines and simplistic drumming, the group sounds lean and mean with a spirit that still thrives and soars.

Lenny Helsing

LOS MONTGOMERY Escondida EP

★★★★★

Los Montgomery



Pleasant sounds from modern-day Chile in the shape of newcomers Los Montgomery. While they may reflect a

passion for The Electric Prunes and 13th Floor Elevators (and incorporate a smart period-style logo too) let's make it plain that these young guys are nowhere near as unhinged, uncompromising or as psychedelic sounding. Their effort is noted, however, and 'Bajo El Sol' and 'Pocion No. 6' do have a full-on presence, and a rather distinctive head-nodding quality – including a bit of Hammond and funk-u-like drums – similar to the English Charlatans over 20 years ago now.

Although the opening title track of this EP is also pretty strong, they've

kept one of the most memorable cuts for last with the flowing cool of 'Sigue Pensando Igual'. Should appeal to discerning appreciators of vintage indie jangle as much as to fans of mid-to-late '60s pop-mod-ops.

Lenny Helsing

NIGHT DIALS

I've Done More Things / I'll Sleep When I Die

★★★★★

Ciao Ketchup



Night Dials are a London-based psych quintet who cut half of this debut 45 at Liam Watson's ultra-hip

Toe Rag studios, before running out of cash and ending up in the basement of a dingy London pub, making underground music of the most literal sort.

'I've Done More Things' is a real '60s throwback (in a good way), a reverb-heavy, hip-shaking groover with pummeling, insistent rhythms and nicely serrated guitars. It sounds raw and ragged, infused with an effortless aura of cool, and teeming with louche, Britpop swagger. 'I'll Sleep When I Die' is slower, more considered, more interesting. Opening with almost

pensive guitar lines and dreamy, distant-sounding vocals, it shifts up a gear into a more insistent, melodic groove, with pleasingly warm, fuzzed-up bass, and guitar lines which jangle rather than strafe. There's a nice, hooky chorus too.

All in all, an interesting start. A band to watch out for, I think.

Neil Hussey

THE OPTIC NERVE

Penelope Tuesday / Here To Stay

★★★★★

State



New Yorkers The Optic Nerve skirted the lower regions of the late '80s garage revival, and never really gained

the same foothold as, say, The Lyres or The Cynics, disappearing pretty much traceless with a posthumous album released five years after its creation in 1993. The Optic Nerve stood out for having an altogether softer folk-rock sound and a grasp of analogue authenticity.

This State Record single features two unreleased cuts, and displays both sides of the Optics' distinct poles. The topside, 'Penelope Tuesday', is a pre-psychedelic Beatles stomper similar in stature to Detroit's Ellie Pop and owing more to The Dukes Of Stratosphere than The Fuzztones. The flip, 'Here To Stay', (even the title could have been one of Gene's) is so *Turn, Turn, Turn*: sad and moody with brooding, crisp harmonies, and a hypnotic guitar jangle. The only missing ingredient is (unfortunately) a tambourine.

A belting single.

Louis Comfort-Wiggott

PROSIECT CERDDOROL INCA Music Project

★★★★★

Salvation



The story of this release presses all the right buttons – lost recordings by a Welsh art-house cinema band of

charity shop diggers, creating new soundtracks for half-remembered animations, inspired by American '60s psychedelic electronicists. It's a hauntology fever-dream and it's so credentials-heavy it could only be true.

The music itself could never quite live up to the folklore, but this is a sufficiently accomplished trio of tracks, lurching from the bucolic to the raucous via some plainchant on 'Agoriad Swyddogol', 'Cor Cymysg' coming off, rather curiously, as a slice of fuzzy acid-jazz, and finally 'Beethoven' bringing all those influences together with a nice earworm hook and a funky bass line.

All in all this is fascinating and deep-rooted stuff which ends up feeling unpretentious and fun, despite

it's obscure origins (if a release delayed from 2008 can really claim to be "re-discovered"). Any more where this came from?

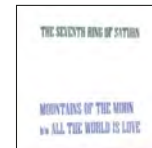
Christopher Budd

THE SEVENTH RING OF SATURN

Mountains Of The Moon / All The World Is Love

★★★★★

Nusrat



Northampton, MA quartet TSROS are veterans of the Fruits de Mer stable but have

opted to release their second album (and first since 2007's self-titled debut) and this accompanying single on their own imprint, complete with indier-than-thou hand-stamped sleeves.

Inside you'll find The Grateful Dead's *Aoxomoxoa* highlight, 'Mountains Of The Moon', stripped of its original acoustic setting and baroque flourishes and re-presented as a chooglin' road tune more akin to that album's 'Doin' That Rag', with Ted Selke's agreeably breathy Garcia-esque vocal tone centre stage. And it works. Flip the 45 over and you'll hear a similarly brave deconstruction of The Hollies' trippy '67 B-side redrawn as a Dukes Of Stratosphere cartoon, complete with Floydian, middle-Eastern organ runs and Leslied vocals.

What's not to like?

Andy Morten

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Ace 40

★★★★★

Ace 7-45 box set



This set celebrates the 40th anniversary of Ace Records, the label that grew from

beneath the wings of Chiswick Records and is now a byword for quality reissues. The challenge for a label that owns the rights to so many back catalogues and has some 2,300 titles currently available is which 14 tracks to pluck from the goldmine?

Well, there's classic blues from BB King, the terrific and dynamic 'Tough Lover' by Etta James, rockabilly from stalwart Glenn Glenn and an unreleased Platters version of Johnny Hampton's northern soul classic, 'Not My Girl'. Add to this an alternate mix of the fantastic 'Get The Picture' by The Scot Richard Case and you have a formidable collection.

The sound quality is superb and, in true Möbius strip fashion, the B-side of the last single is one of the earliest original tracks released by Chiswick, featuring the young Joe Strummer fronting The 101ers: 'Keys To Your Heart'. All this and replica sleeveage too – from the Rock On stall to roll on 50!

Henry Hutton

JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY

★★★★★

Charly DVD+CD



Alongside DA Pennebaker's *Don't Look Back*, *Monterey Pop* and Albert and David Maysles and

Charlotte Zwerin's *Gimme Shelter*, Bert Stern's *Jazz On A Summer's Day* is one of a handful of films which can be said to have both laid the foundations and shaped the future evolution of the music documentary.

Shot in vibrant colour over the four days of the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, Stern's film is far from purely a record of selected live appearances being rather a complete document of the sights and sounds of Newport '58, which arguably pays as much attention to the locale, the environs of the festival location (including the Americas Cup yacht race trials taking place on its doorstep) and the audience itself as it does to the all star cast of performers seen onstage. Originally a fashion photographer (Stern's celebrated portfolio of late Marilyn Monroe portraits being his other best known work) *Jazz On A Summer's Day* is shot with a photographer's eye which lends the images a poetic, almost painterly quality which when added to the film's gentle, easy going pace makes for a memorable viewing experience.

Artists featured include Thelonious Monk, Gerry Mulligan, Dinah Washington, The Chico Hamilton Quartet, Louis Armstrong, Mahalia Jackson and a very youthful looking Chuck Berry, with the performances of The Jimmy Giuffre Trio and Anita O'Day providing some of the film's most memorable moments.

Reissued in a gatefold digibook edition, this deluxe repacking of the film comes complete with a separate audio CD of the complete soundtrack.

Grahame Bent

THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT: RESTORED EDITION

★★★★★

Mr Bongo Bluray



Just where do you start with *The Saragossa Manuscript*? An opulent mid-60s Polish art-house film with a meandering,

picaresque tale within a tale narrative structure of quite mind blowing complexity much beloved of Luis Bunuel and David Lynch and, in counter culture circles, reputedly the favourite film of Jerry Garcia.

Based on Polish author Jan Potocki's rambling early 19th century novel, *The Manuscript Found At Saragossa*, Wojciech Has's category-defying 183 minute cinematic tour de force from 1965 remains one of the genuine unsung jewels of '60s cinema. Now

released on bluray following the complete restoration of the film and the addition of English language subtitles – a process partly funded by Garcia and, following his death, Martin Scorsese – it's not hard to see why *The Saragossa Manuscript* found such a receptive audience in both the UK and the US during the culturally adventurous times of the late '60s and early '70s with its labyrinthine narrative of interlocking stories within stories offering a mystifying head trip not entirely dissimilar in terms of effect to another much lauded underground box office hit of the period – Alejandro Jodorowsky's *El Topo*.

Set in Spain during the Napoleonic Wars, the film catalogues the exotic adventures of Alfonso Van Worden, a captain of guards, when he chances upon an antique manuscript in a battle damaged inn. What follows is a showcase in cinematic narrative worthy of Orson Welles which takes its reference points from all manner of sources including mysticism, occultism, surrealism, illusionism and, of course, the age old mechanics of storytelling.

Grahame Bent

SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY MORNING

★★★★★

THE LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER

★★★★★

Both BFI DVDs



Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning* (1960) and Tony Richardson's *The Loneliness Of The Long Distance Runner* ('62) survive

as two key films in the history and

success of the British realist movement of the early '60s. Based on Allan Sillitoe's novel and short story respectively – one of the key writers of the so-called "Angry Young Men" school – both films are set in Sillitoe's home city of Nottingham and focus on the lives of two rebellious outsiders played by two of the hottest new acting talents of the era. Namely, Albert Finney's portrayal of Albert "Don't let the bastards grind you down" Seaton – an outspoken, hard drinking womaniser who was effectively British cinema's first anti-hero, and Tom Courtenay's equally memorable portrayal of Colin Smith, a rather more complex teenager who finds himself fighting the system from the inside when fate hands him a stretch in borstal after several brushes with the law.

While *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning* is undoubtedly the grittier of the two films, *The Loneliness Of The Long Distance Runner* has a haunting poetic quality all of its own. Both DVDs come with an interesting supporting programme of extras including an interview with Shirley Anne Field (*Saturday Night*), a featurette on cinematographer Walter Lassally's work on *Loneliness* and the *Free Cinema* documentaries, *We Are The Lambeth Boys* ('59) and *Mamma Don't Allow* ('56), both incidentally shot by Lassally, and which gave Reisz and Richardson their first outlets as fledgling directors.

Grahame Bent

SLADE IN FLAME

★★★★★

Salvo DVD+CD



Despite this being a story that Slade themselves wanted to tell it was, in hindsight, a glorious mistake and the

tipping point of the downturn to the first phase of their career (spectacularly revived at the 1980 Reading Festival, but that's another story). Teenage fans turned up to the local fleapit expecting the glam-rock *A Hard Day's Night* and instead found themselves watching an occasionally besequined episode of *The Sweeney*.

This gritty insider tale of the machinations of the music biz featuring Don Arden style management techniques, publicity stunts and violent dirty dealings did not lend itself to the average *Top Of The Pops* fan's shiny view of the music world but is eminently more plausible. The cast includes a swathe of British quota actors: Alan Lake – Diana Dors' squeeze and '70s soft porn actor – is superb as the cowardly, talentless and immoral Jack Daniels. Johnny Shannon as the tyrannical Ron Harding is genuinely intimidating, whilst this movie also marks the first starring role of Tom Conti. The boys in the band just about pull it off in the acting department too with Jimmy Lea particularly showing his latent thespian talent. The set piece scenes filmed against pigeon lofts, grim slum clearance terraces, offshore pirate radio stations and, eventually, packed auditoriums are all the more believable due to bit part appearances by the like of Tommy Vance and Emperor Rosko.

The re-mastering of the film from the original negative has been competently done, despite the Technibeige feel of the original and the CD of the cracking soundtrack is a gratifying extra. As an exercise in illuminating the concept of the pop group as "product" this flick remains peerless.

Henry Hutton



Jim, Nod, Don and Dave turn the heat up

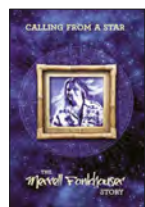


Merrell Fankhauser and friend, Maui bound...

CALLING FROM A STAR Merrell Fankhauser

★★★★★

Gonzo Multimedia



Merrell Fankhauser's legend extends from the surf album he cut with The Impacts in 1962 through to work he recorded with Fapardokly, HMS Bounty and MU,

alongside numerous solo releases. The first half of his autobiography zips along at pace as he moves through the surf and beat scenes, encounters the rip-off merchants of LA, and experiences a psychedelic awakening – heftily aided by numerous substances, of which he writes candidly. Of particular note are the creepy run-ins that MU had with the nearby house of Captain Beefheart's Magic Band and the curious controlling power that Don Van Vliet exercised over his former band mate, Jeff Cotton.

In '73 three quarters of MU decided to decamp to Hawaii in a true embodiment of hippie ideals. Even if you're not a fan of the music, the tales in Maui still make for entertaining reading given the parade of "every guru, healer and cosmic spiritual leader on the planet" that passed through the island in the '70s and '80s. Fankhauser's brushes with Sky Saxon, who retreated to the island to live in a van with his two "wives", are a highlight.

Sadly the last 60 pages of the book are tough going, peppered with marginal projects and awkward personal circumstances. In addition, the accompanying images throughout the book are very poorly reproduced and various grammatical and typographical errors persist. A decent edit and more professional repackaging could easily improve what is, at its heart, a very enjoyable read.

Austin Matthews

DO IT YOURSELF: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN MEDWAY

Stephen H Morris

★★★★★

Cultured Llama



Though Dartford can crow about Mick and Keef, the Medway conurbation of five small-to-medium sized towns, 15 miles east, last pierced the hit parade with

Chicory Tip, not long after the invention of the steam engine. Too close to London for touring big names to ignore, but too far for indigenous acts to attract a following from the Metropolis, Medway has long revelled in its Land That Time Forgot place in musical history. A few have made ripples beyond the district, (JTQ, Nitin Sawhney, Pete Molinari, The Dentists, The Claim and The Len Price 3), but this book is centred around the legacy of two wonderful bands: The Milkshakes and The Prisoners, with particular focus upon the methods and influence of the prolific Billy Childish.

Morris makes a valiant stab at chronicling a DIY ethic that has rubbed off on a few hundred musicians of varying talents from 1977 to the present day. It's a tremendous and well-written effort, with a huge breadth, yet, in attempting to be as exhaustive as humanly possible, the gaps, where there are any, show all the more. The careers of the legendary Sexton Ming and Childish's Milkshakes cohort Mick Hampshire are skirted over. Sawhney is barely mentioned. Also, very conspicuous is the lack of any female perspective.

Despite little discernible link to mainstream musical success, this is the second book to cover the same ground in as many years. The good news is that this 490-page work, is better than *The Kids Are All Square* by a long chalk.

Vic Templar

FLASHBACK ISSUE 7

★★★★★



The 200-page tome *Flashback* can't be called a magazine – it's a series of paperback books.

This issue's cover star is Vashti Bunyan, whose candid and often grim ruminations on her '60s career and subsequent disowning of same, give new depth to the phrase "in-depth". Want to know which local tinker fixed her wagon as it stumbled through the Lake District in the late summer of '68? It's all here. *Flashback*'s stock-in-trade – the adventures of the short-lived/unlucky hairy underground rock band – is represented by lengthy essays on Raw Material and Fuzzy Duck, while an increasing coverage of jazz in its pages sees troubled pianist Bill Evans and UK sessioners Dave Green and Trevor Tomkins eulogised.

Another field in which *Flashback* is ploughing a furrow is in its reproduction of original '60s and '70s music paper interviews. Michael Vosse's '69 eyewitness account of The Beach Boys' Smile saga is thoroughly engrossing; a pair of Van Morrison interviews conducted during the immediate aftermath of *Astral Weeks*, and another Jimmy Page outing from '70 will thrill fans.

Elsewhere, globe-trotting US duo Euphoria's extraordinary story is chronicled, Norwegian psych-folk enigmas Oriental Sunshine have their bubble burst and we're treated to plenty of the lengthy reviews we've come to expect from this esteemed publication.

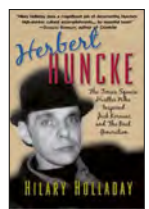
Andy Morten

HERBERT HUNCKE: THE TIMES SQUARE HUSTLER WHO INSPIRED JACK KEROUAC AND THE BEAT GENERATION

Hilary Holladay

★★★★★

Schnaffner Press



It's rare to come across a book that exudes such a beautiful grip from start to finish while adding something genuinely new to well-trodden myths and history. Herbert Huncke was the incorrigible real deal character who inspired Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac by living the kind of extreme low-life they could only marvel at, but gladly work into their era-defining prose. Kerouac, who placed Huncke in *On The Road* as Elmer Hassel, hailed him as the avatar of The Beat Movement, unwitting inventor of its name and greatest of its writers.

Born in 1915, Huncke grew up in Chicago and, from his early teens, was frequenting jazz bars while

commencing a lifetime voraciously consuming hard drugs. He hit New York City in '39, dividing his time between hustling around Times Square, both as rent boy and robber, and many stretches in jail. In the mid-40s, Huncke collided with Burroughs (who described being injected by him in Junky) and Ginsberg, who immortalised him in *Howl*, but was relentlessly ripped off during their fraught, lifelong relationship. Huncke would even offer Ginsberg the pawn tickets to get back the rare books he had just stolen from him.

Huncke, who died in '86 aged 81, wrote marvellously descriptive prose but wasn't published until much later in life, including his autobiography *Guilty Of Everything*. Now, thanks to her immaculate research and finely hued way with words, Hilary Holladay has given this previously little-known giant his long-deserved account and consummate tribute. Unreservedly recommended.

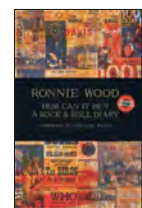
Kris Needs

HOW CAN IT BE? A ROCK 'N' ROLL DIARY

Ronnie Wood

★★★★★

Genesis Publications



Fear not, paupers!

This isn't one of Genesis's 300 quid hand-crafted luxury editions, sealed with the artist's own spit and wrapped in one of his old vests. No.

It's an affordable alternative, still a thing of beauty and wonder but half the size and a tenth of the price.

When Ronnie Wood was slogging around the pubs, clubs and ballrooms of Britain as a member of The Birds in 1965, he kept a diary. Said diary recently turned up "at the back of a drawer in me mum's house" and, so smitten was our Ron that he decided to reproduce it in book form. You'll be glad he did.

First, the presentation. The pages are literally replicas of the diary, complete with Ronnie's hand-written thoughts and crammed with details of the fascinating minutiae of his life as a semi-pro musician in the mid-60s. As for the content, *everything* is recorded, from almost daily live engagements ("Morecombe (sic): Terrible, the most useless booking ever!") to band practices ("Did 'Fire' and 'You Must Believe Me'") and all that falls between ("Second night with Ali's new Marshall PA (which he swapped from Dave Taylor for his scooter)").

As The Birds' popularity increases ("The record is 45 in *Record Mirror*!"), so do their encounters with members of The Who, Kinks, Yardbirds, Pretty Things and pretty much every other beat and R&B in the country at the time. The action is illustrated with Ronnie's drawings and private photos and memorabilia and his comments from

today's standpoint are both lucid and full of fondness for his formative days.
Andy Morten

RIOT ON SUNSET STRIP: ROCK 'N' ROLL'S LAST STAND IN HOLLYWOOD

Domenic Priore

★★★★★

Jawbone Press



While London is still generally regarded as the epicentre of mid-60s cool and San Francisco lives on in the popular imagination as the city that then took

on the mantle, this book makes the strongest possible case for LA actually being the glowing global heart of hip for at least two brief years of the hallowed decade.

Just a brief roll call of names that emerged from the white heat of the city's creative core during this time is enough to cement the claim – The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, Love, The Doors, Captain Beefheart, The Mothers, Tim Buckley, The Seeds, The Music Machine and many more – but the genius of this book is the way it insists that it was only LA, with its size, its diversity, its proximity to Hollywood and the newest technological innovations that could possibly have allowed such a diverse over-lapping range of acts to develop and cross-fertilise.

Excellent on the racial, political and historical background to The Sunset Strip's arrival as the ultimate teen destination and packed full of astounding facts, the book does nevertheless occasionally rely over-

heavily on lists as a surrogate narrative and the barrage of bands, clubs, scenesters and addresses becomes both overwhelming and slightly relentless. Also, given what's now known about Bob Markley's sexual predilections, there's no excuse for excising such grim realities from the glowing West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band section.

That said, anything that weaves together the cinema and TV, nightlife, architecture, pop music, drug culture, graphic design and political atmosphere of the era quite so well deserves your undivided attention.

Hugh Dellar

RINGO: WITH A LITTLE HELP

Michael Seth Starr

★★★★★

Backbeat



Given his ubiquity and charisma you could be forgiven for thinking there must already have been numerous Ringo biographies in print but,

surprisingly, Michael Seth Starr's strictly unauthorised and affectionately warts-and-all account of the anything but ordinary life and times of Richard Starkey is the first such tome to make it onto the bookshelves.

The first half of the book is taken up with a detailed portrayal of the young Richey Starkey's childhood and adolescence, his life-defining fascination with drums and his early excursions into first skiffle and then rock 'n' roll with Rory Storm & The

Hurricanes prior to joining The Beatles in August 1962 and subsequently spreading the pop culture gospel across the globe throughout the whirlwind of the next eight years.

The second half of the book meanwhile deals with Ringo's post-Beatles solo and movie career documenting both the early successes of his solo career in terms of the both the early hits and the declining fortunes of each subsequent album release from the mid-70s onwards. Likewise, after the initial promise of his roles in *The Magic Christian* and *That'll Be The Day*, the book charts the stalling of Ringo's acting career while also chronicling the ups and downs in his relationships with John, Paul and George.

Inevitably, Ringo's slide into alcoholism is dealt with, as is the formation of his succession of All Star Bands. Overall though, the abiding image is of Ringo the happy go lucky survivor who, against all odds, is still out there doing what he does best – being himself.

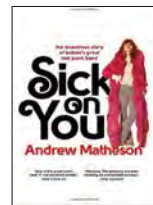
Grahame Bent

SICK ON YOU: THE DISASTROUS STORY OF BRITAIN'S GREAT LOST PUNK BAND

Andrew Matheson

★★★★★

Ebury Press



The autobiographies of the vast majority of musicians reach, if you're lucky, the excitement levels of a wet Wednesday evening in Eastbourne. This is

down to the simple reason that the vast majority of bands are deadly dull. Boggled down in details of uncles and cousins, what the set list was where and who left when, their tales trudge from childhood reminiscences to fame and onwards into the cosy glow of slippers-and-pipe reflection. *Sick On You* is a rare exception to this rule.

Told with the verve, panache and snarkiness you'd expect from a man who survived playing to Yeovil yokels in 1974 clad mostly in a '50s cocktail dress, rouge and stack-heeled shoes, this book perfects that precarious balancing act of being both self-aggrandising and self-deprecating simultaneously – and works wonders as rock 'n' roll mythology. It's also the funniest music book I've ever read by quite some measure.

Skipping personal history almost completely, the book begins with our (anti-)hero's arrival in The Smoke, armed with little more than tuppence ha'penny, a guitar, great hair and a manifesto for the creation of the perfect band. It then details his picaresque journey through the horror that was early '70s London – squats, ultra-violence, sleaze and all – and the tragi-comic failure of his band, The Hollywood Brats, to break into the big time, despite being better than anything else around. Along the way, we encounter Cliff Richard, Freddie Mercury, Mick Jones, Talcy Malcy, Vivisect Westwood and many more.

As good as the glorious, gutter-punk, razor-sharp racket that it takes its name from – and that's really saying something.

Hugh Dellar



The Birds in '65, with Ronnie Wood, bottom



Father John Misty



Charles Bradley & The Extraordinaires

GREEN MAN FESTIVAL Glanisk Park, Brecon, Powys

Thursday 20th-Sunday 23rd August

After a few years gap between *Shindig!*'s attendances at Green Man – now in its 13th year – it was a relief to note on arrival that although having grown in size this was still the same “Folk And Music Festival” it has always been. Along with the magnificent array of music, there are now even more things to see, do, eat and drink – the Courtyard beer tent offered 108 beers and ciders to choose from, including Saturday night headliners Super Furry Animals' very own Fuzzy brew. DJ sets from Ghost Box and Pete Fowler, an array of interesting films from Peter Strickland's S&M spin on Euro art house, *The Duke Of Burgundy*, to the family fun of *Paddington*, an array of book talks (Mick Houghton on his Sandy Denny biog and Rob Chapman discussing his new history of psychedelia), a plethora of Q&As, the most entertaining being with Mark E Smith – who cordially slated all manner of people and took great pleasure in discussing crisps before walking off mid-chat – and more workshops and events than we could even comprehend, offered something for everyone –

but let's focus on the live music.

Over the last year and a half **TEMPLES** have been criss-crossing the globe with immense success. Their Friday night set showed what this experience and newfound confidence has allowed them. Material from their heralded *Sun Structures* was revitalised with further extemporisation, sonic textures and energy whilst one of the new songs the band have been airing of late, 'Henry's Cake', took toytown pop to dizzying heights. Temples have grown immensely and their audience-pleasing set really suited the Green Man spirit. Earlier that evening London based Welsh scamps **TRECCO BEIS** mixed up garage and psych influences with a slacker approach that hinted at both Gorky's and Race Horses and suggested The Allah-Las as a benchmark. Refreshing. On the main stage **CALEXICO** played with professional assuredness, blending their token Tex-Mex with garage and alt-rock, including a spirited rendition of Love's 'Alone Again Or'.

Saturday morning revellers emerged not to the Biblical storms of the previous few days' forecasts but to blue sky, dazzling sunshine and soaring temperatures. Ha! That *that*, Met Office!



Photo by Tommy Jackson/Redfem

Super Furry Animals' Gruff Rhys

The perfect conditions then for grabbing the first beer of the day and lying on the grass in front of The Mountain Stage for **THE LEFT OUTSIDES**, in which the husband and wife duo greeted the morning sun with their beautiful psych-folk mix of electric guitar, violin and voice. An early afternoon set by **COLORAMA**, the Welsh aggregation headed by 21st century pop polymath, Carwyn Ellis, offered a concise introduction to their canon of fanciful, often whimsical tunes, leaning heavily on 2012's *Good Music*. Highlights included that album's irresistible ode to unrequited love, 'Why Is She', and a surprisingly dynamic, extended rip through its title track.

All the cool kids like **JANE WEAVER** – or so the saying goes – and today she wooed and wowed the inhabitants of The Walled Garden with a set largely drawn from last year's much-

admired *The Silver Globe*. Weaver's spectral, icy tones and her band's no-frills motorik beats and electronic flourishes on 'Argent' and 'Mission Desire' almost define The Green Man Sound.

There's a face-off of sorts at 2000 as **CHARLES BRADLEY & THE EXTRAORDINAIRES** and **WHITE FENCE** vie for our attention. Bradley's heartfelt soul showmanship – almost 50 years in the making but not captured until 2011's *No Time For Dreaming* and the following year's *Soul Of America* documentary film – is the perfect tonic to those who need a break from the acoustic singer-songwriters and indie-rock that is Green Man's stock-in-trade. Meanwhile, Tim Presley's DIY recording project turned bona fide band, White Fence (now boasting Drinks partner Cate Le Bon in its ranks), power through a frantic set of guitar-heavy jangly

“It wasn't until the dying blips and feedback squalls of a 10-minute ‘The Man Don't Give A Fuck’ had ceased that any of us realised it was pissing down again”



psych-punk that recalls a 1976-vintage re-imagining of July and Faine Jade, to huge roars of acceptance from a turned-on audience.

Before tonight's headliners, **TELEVISION** take to the main stage to perform their classic '77 debut, *Marquee Moon*. Tom Verlaine's voice and Richard Lloyd's West Coast guitar passages remained undiminished by time.

As far as the most anticipated performance of the weekend goes, all bets were off. Seen as something of a homecoming to a festival whose ethos owes them a great deal, **SUPER FURRY ANIMALS** have been on hiatus for most of Green Man's recent years of success. But a series of live shows over the summer to promote an expanded reissue of 2000's groundbreaking Welsh-language album, *Mwng*, have only reminded us how good they were and how much we'd missed them.

Clad in their now-trademark white overalls, the quintet ambled onto the stage to the strains of 'Slow Life's fairground techno intro before regaling an adoring, swollen audience with a thrillingly diverse selection of electronically-enhanced kaleidoscopic

blasts from their estimable back catalogue. 'Demons', 'Run! Christian! Run!' and 'Zoom!' were welcome choices and there was a mid-set triumvirate of *Mwng* tunes, with the hypnotic, almost hymn-like 'Pan Ddaw'r Wawr' putting many of us into a trance. Surprisingly, the hits didn't come as thick and fast as some might have hoped, and there was nothing from '96 debut, *Fuzzy Logic*, but the joyous, country-tinged 'Mountain People' (on The Mountain Stage. At the foot of a mountain. In front of people.) couldn't fail. It wasn't until the dying blips and feedback squalls of a 10-minute 'The Man Don't Give A Fuck' had ceased that any of us realised it was pissing down again.

After a night of torrential storms, and with many campers essentially flooded and washed away, the sun re-appeared on Sunday afternoon for the closing day, with festival-goers still in high spirits. As the skies cleared **STEVE GUNN** took to The Mountain Stage and continued the similar well-placed dexterous hallucinogenic guitar breaks of the previous night's Richard Lloyd. Primarily focusing on the *Way Out Weather* album, Gunn conjured up the feel of the American greats of yonder years – the

Dead, Byrds etc. Fabulous, as was Gunn's recent touring partner **RYLEE WALKER**, who played over in The Walled Garden with his quartet (12-string acoustic and vocals, electric guitar, double bass and electric piano) hitting the *avant-garde* percussions of Tim Buckley – no faint praise. Back on The Mountain Stage, **MATTHEW E WHITE** furthered the sense of why American artists today trump the competition with soul, passion and musical chops. From the oft White and his amazingly talented band stunned with their light and shade, from his whispered growl to his sweet tenor, from country-rock to soul and Brazilian-flecked brilliance. Next time this man has to play when it's dark. Big Love indeed.

Consummate America performer Father John Misty took to the stage and ploughed through highlights from his already classic *I Love You, Honeybear* when night fell. As is the norm, he sang his open heart out and delivered. His patter as a seasoned raconteur also hit all of the right buttons with the crowd; banter on the proliferation of painted faced hippy children, his dislike of Starbucks and best of all "My favourite

album? I listen to MP3s. Streamed MP3s!" were greeted with chuckles aplenty. Like his lyrics, the character of Misty subverts splendidly on all counts taking the piss out of our 21st century foibles. Thing is, he can rock like a motherfucker too as the rawer material from debut *Fear Fun* attested. A one of a kind performer in an often barren musical landscape.

Far Our Stage headliners **GOAT** may well have been the weekend's highlight, but then when Super Furry Animals blew our minds and Misty, White and others excelled it'd be unfair to crown them alone, but they were the ultimate tripped-out festival experience though: frightening, sensual and as tight as PJ Proby's pants. These secretive, costumed Swedes were the genuine living embodiment of a stoned late '60s commune band. Transcendental. Something that is both encouraging and surprising is how such an authentically psychedelic outfit have won the heart of the masses. A truly mind melting performance – those girls don't stop!

After the burning of the Green Man and some rousing fireworks it was over... for us at least. Roll on 2016.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills and Andy Morten



Spooner Oldham and Dan Penn weave their quiet magic

DAN PENN & SPOONER OLDHAM

Union Chapel, London

Tuesday July 14th

Outside it's a rainy summer's evening in Islington but inside, the often forbidding Union Chapel feels more like a Southern back porch as American soul legends Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham run through a triumphant string of classic hits written for the likes of Percy Sledge and Janis Joplin, all interspersed with down home anecdotes delivered by Penn in his thick as molasses Alabaman drawl. In their '60s and '70s heyday, the pair only released one solo album each (Oldham's beautifully eccentric *Pot Luck* from '72 and Penn's magnificent *Nobody's Fool* from '73, originals of which would both set you back a pretty penny), but they wrote countless classics for other artists, many of which make up the bulk of the night's set.

With a simple set up of Oldham on Wurlitzer electric piano and Penn, clad in a splendid pair of farmer-style dungarees, on acoustic guitar, the duo open with 'I'm Your Puppet', a '65 B-side recorded by Penn which was

turned into a hit by James and Bobby Purify the following year. The sound the duo makes is extraordinary, a pair of men in their mid-70s sounding decades younger, Penn's voice especially powerful and affecting (even if his on-stage banter is hard to decipher thanks to a combination of the venue's acoustics and his semi-impenetrable accent).

For the next hour and a half, they run through an incredible 22 song set awash with modern standards like Aretha Franklin's 'Do Right Woman, Do Right Man', James Carr's 'The Dark End Of The Street' and 'You Left The Water Running' (recorded by both Otis Redding and Barbara Lynn), all punctuated with newer tunes such as 'Memphis Women And Chicken' from Penn's '94 "comeback" album, *Do Right Man*. The pair close with the stirring Irma Franklin cut, 'Zero Willpower' from '79 and, to the sound of a standing ovation, they head out into the cool night having spread more than a little of their Muscle Shoals magic on this rainy corner of darkest North London.

Thomas Patterson

"Penn's on-stage banter is hard to decipher thanks to a combination of the venue's acoustics and his semi-impenetrable accent"

POWDER

The Blues Kitchen, Camden, London

Thursday July 23rd

THE FROST BROTHERS

The Betsey Trotwood, Farringdon, London

Saturday July 25th

Since their dissolution in the late '60s, California's Powder have reformed and played again on a few occasions: initially on the back of Alec Palao's 1993 archival *Biff Bang Powder* set, a release that has consistently gained a cult following. Palao, the archivist and bass player, learned from Powder's Rich Martin that it'd be fun to take these unreleased recordings on the road, even though his brother Thomas had retired from the industry. Kid brother Mickey was brought in on drums and a few shows were played around the group's Bay Area home. Now, over 20 years on, and with a lengthy break in between, Powder return with the addition of Magic Christian man Paul Kopf on vocals. That the band feature only one original member matters little in an era when heroes The Who are two men down. As the anthology has just been re-mastered and re-released on Big Beat as *Ka-Pow!* it makes perfect sense for the re-formed Powder to cross the Atlantic for a few gigs in bass player's Palao's native England.

The Camden set consisted of Powder material then and now. Key pieces from the anthology and new songs from the forthcoming *Cellophane Lane* merged together well, if not seamlessly. Kopf with his mod gear, energetic presence and perfectly enunciated Anglophile vocals recalled the old band whilst adding something without alienating the source; his vocals combining Monkees Mickey Dolenz and Davy Jones. Drumming brother Mickey was splendid, Palao the bedrock and Rich slashed power chords from his Rickenbacker and sang harmony as if it was still '68. Highlights were many and the Powder fans loved it.

Saturday's show was a perfect, if very different, accompaniment. In the tiny upstairs room of the Betsey a throng of fans gathered together to witness an intimate performance of Thomas & Richard Frost's cult '69 favourite, *Visualise*. With Mickey and Rich playing acoustic guitars, Alec on electric bass and Paul on vocals, the group stunned the appreciative audience with fine renditions of 'She's Got Love' et al. Rich sang brilliantly and clearly relished the opportunity, peppering the songs with stories while clearly enamoured by the response.

Two gigs that were truly worth witnessing.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills



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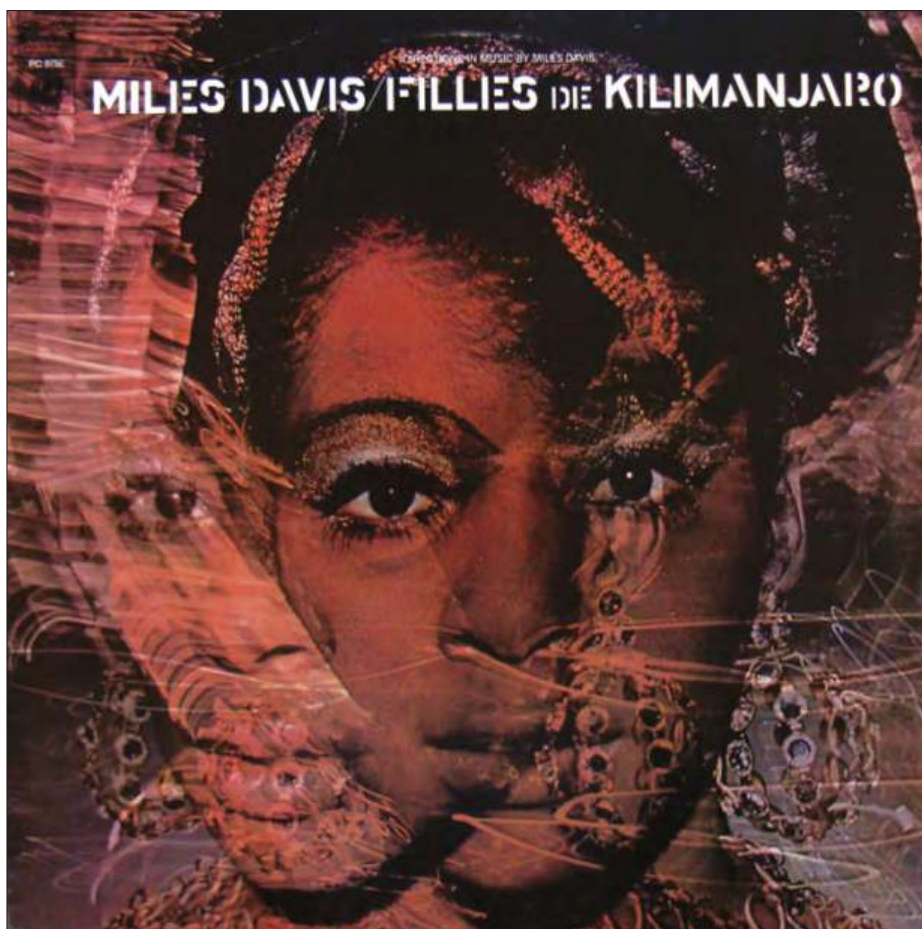
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CHRISTOPHER BUDD looks through the eyes and into the psychedelic soul of a modern jazz icon



No wait! It's only jazz, don't go... oh well. Just you and me then. But it's their loss, 'cause this is the good stuff. With this and his previous album, *Miles In The Sky* (also 1968), Miles Davis was beginning a journey into jazz fusion, which would ultimately lead into his "electric period" and reach its apotheosis with two seminal albums *In A Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew* just a couple of whirlwind years later.

Davis' work rate and proliferation of material in this period was astonishing. *Filles de Kilimanjaro* was released in the UK just months after *Nefertiti*, his last purely acoustic album, and the fourth with his second quintet (Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams). Some of his collaborators would stay; Hancock and Williams for a while, Shorter for longer. But there was someone else who had turned Miles' head towards the explosive sounds around him in '68; sounds that would trickle in to his own work and give him the creative and commercial rejuvenation that he craved. And fittingly, she's literally staring us in the face.

Betty Mabry was a busy (if bored) working model and burgeoning musician. She'd had some songwriting success with The Chambers Brothers, penning their hit 'Uptown', a bluesy nugget of strutting down-tempo funk that

hinted at what was to come. Mabry was part of a hip Greenwich Village scene in '67 when she met Miles Davis and became his second wife a year later. It was she that turned Davis on to Sly Stone and, more importantly, Jimi Hendrix. He absorbed their psychedelic innovations and pursued them to far-out ends of his own. The influence of Hendrix is apparent on *Filles de Kilimanjaro* from the opening bars of 'Frelon Brun' – check out that 'If 6 Was 9' riff.

That Davis was deeply in love with Mabry is made evident in the title of the album's expansive closing track, 'Mademoiselle Mabry', and also on the striking cover, which features a beautiful, and suitably psychedelic headshot of her. And that he would wear his heart on his sleeve so boldly constitutes a rare glimpse into the inner life of a famously inscrutable man. Davis' future *third* wife, Cicely Tyson, had graced the cover of *Sorcerer* in '67, but it's perhaps something of a reveal that when the female form again appears on a Miles Davis cover after this point, it's always represented in a deeply stylised way. Perhaps after Mabry, at least for a while, no other real woman would quite do.

This photo was taken by fashion photographer Yasuhiro Wakabayashi – known as Hiro – whose shots of Jefferson Airplane were

simultaneously gracing the sleeve of *Crown Of Creation*. As well as his grounding in fashion photography, Hiro excelled in technical experimentations, particularly double-exposures, making him the ideal person to capture both Mabry's beauty and the psychedelic vibes she was bringing to her husband. Nor was it the last time Hiro would visit this style – his image of Mabry is strikingly similar to one he produced of Stephanie Farrow for *Harper's Bazaar* the following year.

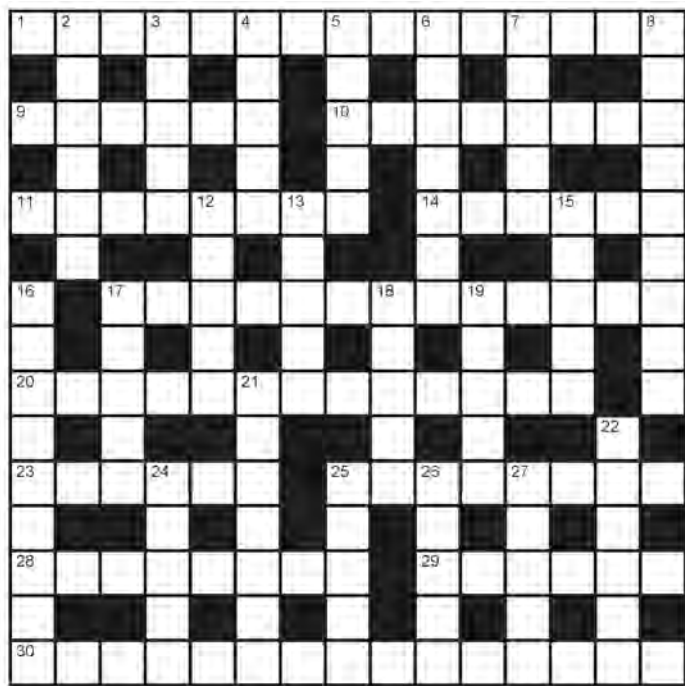
As I'm sure you've figured out, Betty Davis kept her married name and became *the* Betty Davis of a string of should-have-been-huge mid-70s funk-rock records, much beloved of goateed collectors since the '90s. Her marriage to Davis over after just a year, she relocated briefly to London before returning to the US to begin working on her own material. A great band – including the rhythm section from the Family Stone – brought the funk, but Betty expressed something much more personal, more frankly sexual. Never finding commercial success (her fourth album, recorded in '76, was shelved until 2009), Betty was nevertheless a progenitor of uncompromising, unafraid women in music to the present day; "a free spirit" as Miles wrote of his one-time muse in his '89 autobiography, "talented as a motherfucker".

PRIZE CROSSWORD

Enter this issue's prize crossword and get the chance to win the dinky new America box set, *The Warner Bros Years 1971-1977*, containing miniature replica CDs of the US-born, London-raised harmonic folk-rock trio's first eight albums: everything from 1971's platinum-selling self-titled debut through to '77's George Martin-produced concert set, *Live*.

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And don't forget to include your name and address!



Across

- 1 Partner of Bardot and Birkin (5,10)
- 9 Kaptain Kopter and Commander Cassidy travelled through this land (6)
- 10 Aerie Faerie stuff from The Enid (8)
- 11 Lindsay Anderson's role offscreen and on in *O Lucky Man!* (8)
- 14 Where was The Buoys' friend? (6)
- 17 You'll find them in Dr Crippen's Waiting Room (6,7)
- 20 For What It's Worth, he wrote this (7,6)
- 23 "It's shattering to hear / You _____ listen with your ear" - Bee Gees, 'Jumbo' (6)
- 25 Founder member of ELO and The Move (3,5)
- 28 These Killers worship Hindu Gods (Of Love) (8)
- 29 They debuted with *Distortions* (6)
- 30 Joan Baez song, notably performed at Woodstock (5,3,7)

Down

- 2 In 1969 Martin Denny gave us this kind of Moog (6)
- 3 After Moby but before fruit (5)
- 4 R Dean Taylor, The Fall and The Very Things all had one in their house (5)

- 5 The Chocolate Watchband had this Mystique (5)
- 6 Provided a Soul Sacrifice (7)
- 7 What Wilburn Burchette does to The Seven Gates Of Transcendental Consciousness (5)
- 8 Velvet Crush were in the presence of this (9)
- 12 A posthumous Landing for Jimi Hendrix (5)
- 13 Vehicle's Mr ground one of these (5)
- 15 They found that Blue Turns To Grey (5)
- 16 Collections of musicians (9)
- 17 This garage band went Searching in '66 (5)
- 18 A short-lived Silver San Francisco band (5)
- 19 Baby, he said, Your Phrasing Is Bad (5)
- 20 "You claim that all that _____ is / Breathing, eating, defecating" - Van Der Graaf Generator, 'Still Life' (7)
- 22 Snappy Berlin trio (6)
- 24 Early Rory Gallagher band (5)
- 25 Knight, who wrote The WCPAEB's 'If You Want This Love' (5)
- 26 Nellcôte, where The Stones spent 1971 (5)
- 27 Hearts & Flowers' *Of Horses, Kids And Forgotten Women* ended with two of these (5)

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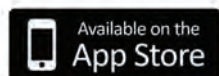
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